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TRAVELS, SPORT, AND POLITICS

IN THE EAST OF EUROPE

NEAR THE SEVEN TOWERS BY THE GOLDEN GATE, CONSTANTINOPLE. [p. 36

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TRAVELS, SPORT, AND POLITICS

IN THE EAST OF EUROPE

BY

THE MARQUIS OF HUNTLY

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL
LIMITED
1887
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CHARLES DICKENS AND EVANS,
CRYSTAL PALACE PRESS.

DEDICATION.

I dedicate this Book to my Wife,

WHO ACCOMPANIED ME IN OUR TRAVELS,

AND TO WHOM I AM INDEBTED FOR THE ILLUSTRATIONS,

AS A TOKEN OF MY LOVE AND REGARD.

H.

PREFACE.

THE first portion of these letters appeared in 1881 in the *Aberdeen Free Press* under the initials C. G.

I have been persuaded to add some letters to friends, and print them as they were written.

I have to thank the proprietors of the *Fortnightly Review* for allowing me to use the article "Eastern Notes," which I wrote in December, 1884.

The rambles herein described did not extend far beyond the limits of Europe, so I have confined the political notes, and have not entered into the larger and important questions of Egyptian and Central Asian policies affecting the British Empire, in reviewing the condition

of the East. It is my opinion that these should be treated separately, and that in dealing with Egypt or Asia Minor we should keep Turkey in Europe distinct from them. It will be observed that the different dates of portions of the work, prior to the existing state of things, confuse the context; but it was considered best to publish the papers as they were written. I do not pretend to speak with authority on Eastern subjects, but simply to record the impressions and criticisms of a traveller.

H.

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TRAVELS, SPORT, AND POLITICS

IN THE EAST OF EUROPE.

THE DANUBE.

Most people, on hearing this river mentioned, picture to their minds a blue-coloured stream flowing through a mountainous country, but in reality for twelve hundred out of the eighteen hundred miles of its course the river flows through a gigantic plain, and its waters are of the muddiest description. Whence then does it derive the popular name of the "Blue Danube"? In the upper reaches of the river, when the snow melts in the mountains, one is at once struck by the extraordinary colour of the water—a mixture of light-green and ultramarine—caused more by the grayness of the pebbles and rocks below it, the brightness of the summer sun, and the clear purity of the water, than by any peculiar tint in

the water itself. But long before the traveller reaches Pesth these colours have vanished, and for the rest of its course the Danube is the dirtiest river imaginable.

Throughout the stream is very rapid, and generally the heights it rises and falls to at the different seasons of the year are regular and well-defined. But 1881 will long be remembered by the inhabitants on its banks for the occurrence of the most disastrous floods on record. Even now (July, 1881) the river has not subsided to its ordinary level, and at Semlin, Baziasch, and many places thousands of acres are still under water; while at Galatz, on the Molda River, which separates Bessarabia from Roumania, and here joins the Danube, villages are seen peeping above the flood, and the railway is still submerged for many miles. Between Vienna and Pesth only small steamers can pass, and there is a canal for part of the way. Some splendid vineyards are to be seen as Buda-Pesth is approached. Situated in a great plain, the town, erected on both sides of the river, occupies a very fine position. On one side the town is called Buda, on the other Pesth, but the Germans call them both "Ofen." A grand suspension bridge connects the two cities; it was built from a design by Clark, the engineer of Hammersmith Bridge, and exactly on its

principle. The heights of Buda command the sister city, and it was from these the Austrians bombarded Pesth in the rising of '49. The royal palaces and buildings are well placed, and few countries can boast of so well-kept and stately a capital as Pesth is.

About a mile up the river is Margaret Island, which belongs to the Archduke Joseph, who purchased it some years ago and has converted it into a park and garden, with restaurants, hotels, etc., to which the public are admitted by a small payment. The island is about a mile in length, and has a tramway from one end to the other. The trees are very fine, and the park has been laid out with great taste. Standard roses in beds bloom luxuriantly, groves of syringas perfume the air, and well-kept paths and roads circulate in all directions. Hot sulphur springs and baths attract invalids, and certainly the place is charming. *On dit* the Archduke has expended vast sums (a million of florins) on it, but the fees paid by the crowds that flock there should give him good interest for his money. At all events the people of Pesth speak gratefully of him, and deservedly delight in the pleasures of Margaret Island. In the Esterhazy gallery at Pesth are many very fine pictures, and it must have been a cheap purchase by the Government from Count

Esterhazy on behalf of the nation. I saw a picture of the Dutch School by Vinoy (or some such name, though I never heard of the painter before), that tickled me immensely. A very lovely girl is starting from her home—an *auberge*. Her fat old mother at the door is evidently urging her on to go out for a walk with a long gray-bearded, miserly-looking old man, who has just linked her arm in his and is "persuading his best." In her right hand she holds her brother—age about seven years—and if she goes, she means to take him too—willy-nilly—hold back as he may. The cow-boy looks out from the barn-door behind them with a broad grin. Why is the trouble on the girl's face so admirably depicted by the artist? It is not far to find. Round the corner of the house, out of sight of the above actors, comes along, mounting some steps, a jolly young buck of a farmer whistling as if the world belonged to him. (Perhaps the whistle has reached the girl's ears alone?) The detail, grouping, distant scenery, and painting throughout are all excellent and charming.

I lingered before three heads by Greuze—such eyes! One girl with her violet-coloured pupils raised, you might imagine her tears were bubbling over the lids. Another had such velvety brownness as almost to reflect the vision.

Curious, that the only representations of the British School in the gallery are a very ugly picture of George I. by Sir J. Reynolds, and two excellent pieces of scenes in ancient Greek History by Angelica Kauffman.

Leaving Pesth, the river winds about the great Hungarian plain—willows as large as oak trees skirt the banks, and alternate with open glades, which are covered with droves of animals. First, a herd of long-horned cattle ; next, droves of brood mares and foals ; then pigs, and now enormous flocks of geese. Each description of animal is by itself, under the guardianship of two men, dressed in a sort of petticoat or long kilt, large wide-awakes, and long knotted thonged whips. The quantities of geese, the ugliness and apparent wildness of the pigs, the size, strength, and quality of the mares and foals strike one most.

There are some pretty Thames-like reaches and peeps along the Danube. Masses of willows, with their green and gray foliage, picturesque churches, and quaint old towns—some with wonderful histories, such as Mohacs, the scene of sanguinary conflicts—but nothing much to be noticed till the steamer reaches Neusatz and Peterwardein. The former is a large and flourishing town, strongly entrenched and commanded by the Fort

of Peterwardein, which is on a large rock on the opposite side of the Danube. A bridge of boats, which is opened to let the steamer pass, connects the two places, and a subterranean passage goes from the bridge up into the fort. The Austrians have strongly fortified the position, and it is well qualified for defence, and commands two arms of the Danube. Passing through the same sort of country, a vast alluvial plain, we arrive at Semlin and Belgrade, towns on opposite sides of the river, about one and a half miles broad at this part, and the former is the last Austro-Hungarian town and possession on the right bank of the river. The country round Semlin is flat and uninteresting, large fields of alluvial soil, prodigal of corn, flax, and other cereals. The river is now the boundary between Servia on the right bank and Hungary on the left. Belgrade, the capital of Servia, is not unpleasantly situated—the land rises from the river, and undulating hills back the town—the cause evidently of the quick turn to the east which the stream now takes. Much will have to be done before Belgrade can rank in European eyes as a nice town. At present the least said of it the better, except to express the hope that, with the opportunities it possesses, the city may be properly and carefully laid out and improved.

The real beauties of the Danube commence after leaving Baziasch, a Hungarian town on the left bank. I had the good fortune to reach this place just as day was breaking, and saw the famous rapids under the most favourable circumstances. It is easy to see what has made the vast plain of Hungary. During the glacial period the ice and snow collected in the Alps, the Tatra and Carpathian Hills, filled this great basin with the *débris* they collected, blocked by the range of mountains called "the little Carpathians," which here runs nearly due north and south, and nothing but these accumulated centuries of ice could have cut a channel for the melting snow through those rocks. What a tearing and a cutting they had to make! The Danube, which in many places between Pesth and Baziasch is two miles broad, becomes contracted into a seething rapid between perpendicular rocks for nearly eighty miles. Sometimes the channel is only 120 yards broad, and in many places less than 200 yards. Gray rocks, cut and scarred, their niches now covered by arbutus and other brushwood, overhang the stream. You know the Lion's Face at Braemar. Here the hills successively represent it; each one grander than the former as they are seen in succession. The tearing rapids, the sharp-cut precipices, the foliage tinted with every hue as the

sun rises, dispelling the mist of the morning which shrouded the heights, made the scene grand and incomparable. On the Rhine you see vineyards and villas, turreted castles, and picturesque towns, but not such scenery of "unassisted nature in all its grandeur" as here. I have seen the cuts made by the Jhelum when leaving the valley of Cashmere to wander through the gorges of the Himalayas on its way to the plains of India; but that river has not the power or the depth of the Danube.

The Kazan rapid is, I think, the finest of the gorges, and close by it one can still decipher Trajan's famous inscription carved on a rock overhanging the river, commemorating his second Dacian campaign, and that here he made a road alongside the river. There are the remains of the road still! The holes in the rocks into which piles were driven horizontally are all visible, and on these piles was laid a platform which fringed the edges of the cliffs, and enabled the great Roman Emperor in A.D. 104, nearly eighteen hundred years ago, to pass his army safely by this treacherous torrent.

I reached Orsova, the last Hungarian town on the left bank of the river, at eight in the morning, and after breakfast drove to see the memorial chapel where the crown of Hungary

was found. In the Hungarian insurrection of 1848 and 1849, Kossuth and other revolutionists stole the regalia and fled from Pesth. It would have been sacrilege, and fatal to their cause, to remove the emblems of their ancient monarchy out of the country, so they secretly buried them just on the borders of Hungary. No one knew where, until years after, one of the party on his death-bed revealed the fact that they were buried near Orsova. The whole district was at once searched; but, not until long afterwards, when excavations were being made for the railway, were the regalia found. The chapel is built over the very spot, at the end of a long avenue of poplars. Roses and other flowers are planted round it, and the place is kept sacred. A marble figure of the Virgin and Child looks down on the spot in the chapel where rests a slab with exact copies in bronze of the crown and other things which were found.

The native ladies in this part of Hungary wear tassels about two or three feet long, of fine red and blue cotton, as fringes over their dresses, both in front and behind, picturesque but useless, unless, perhaps, to annoy the flies—a very plentiful insect on the Danube in all shapes and forms and breeds.

Leaving Orsova, about three miles below it,

the "Iron Gates," the last rapid on the Danube, the once famous frontier of the Turkish Empire, is passed, the river widens, the country opens out, the hills recede farther from the stream. The villages are built more in the mud and thatch style, and Eastern appearances, with their accustomed uncleanliness, become general.

Roumania has now the left, and Servia still the right, bank of the river. The first post on the Roumanian side is Turn Severin—a very nice town, and becoming an important place commercially. The railway runs through it, and large quantities of maize and grain are brought there. The old round tower by the side of the river is the last remaining pier of the bridge, which the Roman Emperor Trajan here made across the Danube, his successor on the throne of Rome seeing fit to destroy it—why, history does not tell. Through similar level plains, with a peep of the Balkans now and again to the south, the river winds rapidly. Leaving the State of Servia on the right bank, and entering the new principality of Bulgaria on that side, the first town reached is Widdin—a dirty, tumble-down looking place—soon afterwards we arrive at Lom Palanka, and, hearing there is a sort of hotel there, decide to stop for the night.

I hope that as Bulgaria rises in the scale of

nations her people will improve the hostelries, for of all the filthy places of that class there are no worse anywhere than in that country at present. It was late in the evening when I arrived. Bulgarian and Russian soldiers met us at the landing-place; we were eagerly led to the hotel (?); dinner, in the shape of food boiled and baked in grease, arrived after a long interval; a fair bottle of the *vin du pays*, and to sleep on a mattress in the corner of the room! But insects of all descriptions soon banished slumber, and coffee, with a pipe, were called for, not long after the sun had risen. The fresh morning air revived one, and made Palanka appear more agreeable. The country on both sides of the Danube here is undulating and green, but the soil has lost its depth and richness. The view to the north shows the snow-clad Carpathians, on the confines of Roumania, while the misty ridges of the Balkans are to be seen on the south.

Strolling outside the town, I came upon a herd of pigs tended by several urchins—pigs, indeed, but more like those of the Indian plains than "tame porkers." Never did I behold such a skinny, savage-looking set of brutes, the bristles on their backs, several inches long, standing up like the fins of a perch. What sort of pork do they make? But I forget, the Turks do not

eat pork, and having gone "bag and baggage" out of Bulgaria, these may be presents sent to the restored owners of the country by the Mussulmans, in revenge for their dismissal! I beat a hasty retreat from the pigs, and went on board the steamer for breakfast, starting soon after on our voyage, and in a short time reached Rustchuk, on the Bulgarian side, nearly opposite to Giurgevo, on the Roumanian side of the river. The former appears to be in a most dilapidated condition. The few minarets that remain from the bombardment of the Russians are tottering to their fall, and the town looks decayed—a great contrast to Giurgevo, which, like all Roumanian towns, seems a stirring go-ahead place—Turks, Greeks, and, of course, "the Eastern beggar," all in full swing. As Rustchuk is the terminus of the Varna railway, by which the Constantinople mails come, and connected by boat with Giurgevo, whence goes the main line to Bucharest and Vienna, it appears strange that nothing has been done to produce anything like order amidst the ruins of the town. The arrangements for passengers crossing the Danube from Rustchuk to Giurgevo are simply disgraceful.

Leaving Giurgevo, the river widens out still more, and its extent and size astonish the traveller. Five hours afterwards we reach Silis-

tria and see the old entrenchments of the English army in 1854, and shortly afterwards come to a pretty little town called Tarakoi. Tier upon tier of nice Swiss-like huts, each with a small garden and fruit trees, rise in succession from the river bank, and make a very pleasant *coup d'œil.* Unfortunately, the impression is removed to a great extent by an expedition into the town ; the streets are narrow, and dirtily kept. Unpleasant odours abound, but still there is some regularity, and I must give Tarakoi precedence amongst Danubian villages for having a pretty effect if for nothing else. Soon after this we enter the Dobrudscha on the right bank of the river, and now Roumania owns both sides. This territory was given her in exchange for Bessarabia, purloined by Russia.

Tchernoya is the first town reached in the Dobrudscha, and close by are seen the remains of Trajan's wall, which extended from the Black Sea to the Danube. The ditch and bank are exactly similar to the Roman entrenchments or walls in parts of Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. A railway goes from Tchernoya to Kustendje on the Black Sea, and at the latter place it is said King Charles of Roumania intends building docks, etc., and fortifying the place. English engineers are at present surveying these for him.

Early next morning we arrive at Ibraila, which port and its neighbour Galatz (about thirteen miles down the river) are the two exporting depôts on the Danube, and a very good trade they are doing. Numbers of English screw steamers, "propellers" as they are commonly called, are engaged shipping maize and corn in both roadsteads. The water being inordinately high, the facilities for loading are better than usual; but much requires to be done for the convenience of the ships, and the harbour arrangements are bad at both places. Reports are rife of the questions being raised in connection with the International Danubian Commission; and it is to be hoped the European States will agree to continue it, and also to increase its powers, while there seems every prospect of the trade on the river improving and enabling the Commissioners to carry out many much-needed works. Ibraila and Galatz appear to be flourishing towns, and there are pleasant drives in the neighbourhood of the latter town. If it were not for the badly-paved roads, over which the energetic, but excellent, little "Victorias" carry you at a pace calculated to "shake you to shillings," you would enjoy yourself. Having arrived at the public park of Galatz, about one and a half miles from the harbour, a walk to the

bank overlooking the Molda gives one a good view towards Bessarabia to the east, down the Danube, and away to the south over the Dobrudscha, as far as the Balkans. Unfortunately, the scene is now (July, 1881) marred by the frightful inundations which completely cover the Molda Valley. The railway is immersed, and the inhabitants can only get to their houses by boats.

Having left Galatz by steamer about one o'clock, we could not get farther than Tulcha, forty miles down, as the pilot would not venture by night amid the numerous bends of the river beyond this, and here we anchor at seven p.m. Tulcha is called by the English sailors "Mosquito Bay," and deservedly. These insects, whose buzz is worse than their bite, swarm in defiance of all attempts to warn them off with tobacco—while the bull-frogs make night hideous with their curious and continuous chatter. The only thing to do is to exercise patience. As soon as daylight breaks we start off, and then sleep is possible, in the absence of noisy frogs and hungry mosquitoes. The Danubian Commission selected the central or Sulina branch of the river as the one to improve, and though much has been done, much remains yet undone. The bends and turns might be straightened in many parts. A steamer is seen miles away on the port side,

and in a short time the same vessel approaches to starboard. It is wonderful, however, what has been done, and how the trade has increased since 1856.

Imagine a dead flat, as large, if not larger than the county of Aberdeen, cut in all directions by channels of the river flowing between continuous groves of reeds, six to seven feet high (to the roots of which the pilots ascribe the almost mythical (?) length of twenty feet), and you can understand what sort of country the region known as the mouths of the Danube is. The Sulina Channel, admirably marked, buoyed, and regulated, wanders through this almost endless swamp; while we disturb every sort of wild fowl, swans, geese, eagles, etc. The old-fashioned herons, pelicans, and storks, stand on one leg by the banks, or strut about like human beings, peering for fish, and knowing that the wash of the steamer is a good purveyor of the luckless finny tribe for their rapacious cupboards. What a place for wild-fowl shooting! But where to sojourn for the sport, and how to get the birds when shot, are questions which are easier asked than answered.

At twelve o'clock we reached Sulina, built on the mud by the energy of English engineers, and backed for the most part by English money. Wonderful works are the wharves, breakwaters,

and lighthouse. The bar, with only nine feet at low water, has been lowered to twenty-two feet by constant dredging. Let us hope the good work will still progress. That the Danube may become more open for the commerce of the world, to the benefit of the countries and the millions of people situated on its banks, is our fervent wish as we steam by Sulina Lighthouse into the Black Sea, on our way to Constantinople.

CONSTANTINOPLE.

THE steamer I had taken a passage in reached the entrance of the Bosphorus just as the sun was setting. Opposite the Kavac forts she had to bring up and send an officer with her papers to the official on duty, before being allowed to proceed further. The sentinel stood with the rope in his hand ready to pull the flag down on the bugle announcing sunset. And the Turk would have shut up his office and made the ship wait all night for him, if her boat had not landed before the flag was down. It was a great relief to see the officer step on shore and enter the office before the signal was given. But he was only just in time, as a few minutes afterwards the trumpet sounded. It appears to be rather discourteous of the Turks, now that time is everything to the merchant in the delivery of his ship's cargo, not to keep two sets of officials on duty, and to pass vessels at all hours down the Bos-

phorus. The channel is so well lighted, and the navigation is so simple, that excuses on the score of danger cannot be urged. The reason is a political one. The Turk insists on the existing absurd regulations, which are presumed to be for his protection. But by a little arrangement supervision could be just as efficient, and ships might pass at night, to the great benefit in many instances of the commercial interests concerned.

While we wait the return of the boat, there is leisure to admire the scenery around, and to wonder at Nature's gifts. Certainly, the great highway from the north-east to the south, this extraordinary channel, which is called the Bosphorus, connecting the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmora, separating Europe and Asia, is endowed with lavish beauty. The varying width of the channel, here about half a mile broad, extending first on one side, then on the other, into pleasant bays, the undulating ravines, and wooded promontories, are Nature's attractions for this lovely spot. And they have been justly appreciated. The shores on either side are lined with palaces and great villas—while here and there Turkish villages rise in terraces from the shore, and their peculiar wooden houses, red-tiled roofs, and projecting eaves increase the picturesque character of the scene.

The entrance from the Black Sea is about thirteen miles (I believe) from Constantinople, in a direct line, but the turns in the channel make it very much longer. I will here note the different places on the Bosphorus, which several days' excursions on and around it made me acquainted with. The first thing that strikes the eye is the lofty tower and ruins of Kavac, just above the fort on the Asiatic side. This ruin is called by some the "Genoese Towers," but I should fancy its important position invited others to fortify it before those active Italians visited the Bosphorus, although doubtless they used, and probably improved the defences.

It stands magnificently. A large square tower and quadrangle face the north and the Black Sea, on the summit of a rock; battlemented causeways, flanked by round towers at intervals, stretch from the tower south-east and south-west, enclosing inner defences, down almost to the shore; and evidently a ship might here in ancient days discharge and leave her cargo in safety, if so she desired. Not only must the castle have been a good watch-tower over the Euxine, and a stronghold to its possessors, but it commanded the bay below it, which, sheltered from the north and east, was an excellent and safe anchorage for vessels. Leaving Kavac to

the European side, the Bay of Buyukdere opens out, and here not only is there a large Turkish townlet, with its picturesque wooden houses and quaint red roofs, but on the lower side, nearest the shore, aristocracy resides—most of the Ambassadors from the foreign Courts have their summer residences here.

There is a beautiful drive from Buyukdere past a large grove of plane trees, where it is said Godfroy de Bouillon assembled the champions of Christendom for one of the last crusades, westwards up a valley fertile with forest trees and cultivated fields, past the great aqueducts which for many centuries have helped to supply Constantinople with water, and some of which form one of the few remnants of the good but unavoidable work of a Sultan. The fine trees and general scenery in the forest of Belgrade make it well worthy of a visit. The road is good and must have been well made, but I noticed many of the bridges, which had been admirably erected, falling to ruin from want of repair. On the same side away from the shore I came across a little Greek chapel situated in a secluded nook. It was evidently cared for. Besides the large trees which stood sheltering around it, shrubs were planted along the path and had just been watered. An old gray-bearded man was at the

door, and gratified by a few paras (pence) instantly desired to show me everything. The chapel was hardly fifteen feet square, but everything inside was most neatly arranged. There were three altars, with pictures of the Saviour and the Virgin, and candles with framed looking-glasses, and tawdry tinsel upon each. The walls were covered with pictures, all of curious subjects, but one by the side of the exit door on the right hand amused me. The artist had tried to depict the Last Day, and the difference between the saints and the sinners was most marked. The former were lovely in pink and white, while no devils were ever painted with blacker bodies, or longer ears, or more serpentine tails than the latter were given. The picture was of ancient date and carefully executed. The old man had been watching me while I closely examined this work of art, and, as I turned from it with a smile at its grotesqueness, I met his gaze. He shook his head more in sorrow than in anger, and offered me a tin flagon of water, which he filled from a beautiful well just behind the centre altar. I drank heartily, and thanked him by mute signs, as not a word of his language could I speak, or I might have been tempted to explain my ideas of the forms and figures of angels and devils! About two miles beyond Buyukdere is the small village of Therapia,

chiefly noticeable for the residences of the French, Italian, and English Ambassadors, who have, I think, chosen a far better spot than their brethren at the former place, as Therapia, almost facing the entrance from the Black Sea, gets thence the cool breeze, while Buyukdere, sheltered in the bay and facing the south, misses it. There are charming gardens attached to each embassy at Therapia, which make the place a pleasant resort for the weary diplomat, who here complains of the excess of work, on account of the number of consular posts throughout the East, and also perhaps from the Turk's delight in providing Europe with plenty of scope for even superabundant diplomatic energy.

Therapia was at the beginning of this century the favourite residence of the wealthy and ancient Greek families of high standing, who had many splendid palaces here. They held the high office of Dragoman (interpreter) to the Porte, and the Hospodars of Wallachia were chosen from among them; but one family after the other incurred the Sultan's displeasure, and this lovely spot frequently witnessed a murderous termination of their lives. At last, in the insurrections which broke out in 1821 and 1822, all the Greeks of the Faual (the name then given to this district) were got rid of under circumstances of even greater barbarity

than have occurred among or been committed by any race or nation—which is saying a great deal. But Turks and Jews are the cruellest of human races, and, when united, their deeds are likely to be dreadful—as they were on this occasion.

Opposite to Therapia there is a fine valley on the Asiatic side, extending a considerable distance inland. The road, flanked by avenues, first passes a narrow plain used for military reviews, and by enthusiastic Englishmen as a cricket ground ; and arrives in about one mile at the two kiosks, which were built by the late Sultan Abdul Aziz for the Empress of the French when she paid him a visit. These splendid châteaux, built at great cost, well furnished, in the centre of gardens, and surrounded by magnificent trees, were intended to receive Her Imperial Majesty at tea.

Rumour is doubtful as to whether she ever came there, but is positive that no one has lived there since. The officers from the neighbouring barracks sent for the furniture from time to time as their fancy required, and now the kiosks are empty, and are actually tumbling to pieces.

Close by the road, beyond these decaying palaces, I came upon a huge plane tree, standing alone in the glade ; its trunk and roots so knotted and gnarled as to resemble an oak tree. Time had caused most of its lofty branches to fall ; but

the stem sent forth many limbs in full vigour of foliage, some twenty feet from the ground. I paced thirty-five yards round the tree as near its base as I could walk, and reflected how many stirring periods it had survived in its probable growth of over a thousand years! The forest which here begins was the haunt of the ancient Anatolian robbers, who vexed the trade of the Venetians and Genoese. Here the Turks sheltered long before they gained a footing in Europe, but now quiet picnic parties assemble and revel under the forest shade. I was much struck by the fact that the Turkish peasant women we met here and in other rural districts did not wear the yashmak over their faces, nor seek to avoid us, while they seemed very quiet, industrious people. About half-way down the Bosphorus are the two famous fortresses opposite each other—the one called Anatole Hissar, or the Castle of Asia; the other Roumeli Hissar, or the Castle of Europe. The former, a series of rather low walls flanked by small but lofty round turrets, was long the Turks' fortress and defence on the Asian coast; and the story goes that the Greek Emperors refused their repeated applications for land on the European side. At last permission was given to Mahomet II. to have as much land as a bullock's hide would

cover or contain. The wily Turk, following the ancient legend of Carthage (with which the tale may be confounded), cut the hide into thin strips, and secured for himself the rocky promontory on which the Roumeli Hissar stands. This he gradually fortified until he completely secured his position. Two fine round towers, conspicuous from all parts of the Bosphorus, flanking the northern and southern corners, are joined by high walls, on the top of which are wide causeways protected by battlements, extending round to the water's edge. Approaching Constantinople, we pass on the Asiatic side a palace of the Sultan's where the Empress of the French resided, and on the European side come to a long chain of palaces of white marble, among which is the residence of the ex-Sultan Murad, a lunatic; the palace of the late Sultan, Abdul Aziz, called the Dolma Batche, which is unoccupied; and the harems and courtiers' apartments connected in the same line, which make a grand show. But on nearer inspection it is lamentable to see the decay of the buildings.

The marble terraces are upturned and broken by the earth and plants below them; the iron gates and railings are twisted, rusted, and torn; the walls and roofs look dilapidated from want of repair. Close by the Dolma Batche is the

elegant small mosque (pleasantly situated on the shore) of Ortakeny. This was the favourite mosque of the late Abdul Aziz. The palace of Yildiz, the residence of the present Sultan, is seen far up the hills at the back. They say he has chosen this residence far away from Stamboul in fear and dread of the fanatic population he governs.

We now reach Constantinople. The Bosphorus here throws an arm eastwards, which is called the Golden Horn. On the triangle between it and the Sea of Marmora stands the ancient Byzantium, made the capital of the Roman Empire of the East by Constantine, and called after him Constantinopolis, now called by the Turks, Stamboul, which is a corruption of the Greek words "εις την πολιν," "this is the city." On the north shore of the Golden Horn is Galata, founded by the Genoese, the abode of the Greek, Armenian, English, and other merchants, and above, on the hill, is Pera, where European shops enliven the streets, and foreign embassies look grandly and imperiously down.

Opposite to Stamboul are Scutari and Kada Keui, on the Asiatic side. The situation of this collection of cities, their admirable position, the histories attaching to them, combine in interesting the traveller, but I must confess to a disappoint-

ment on the whole. The effect of the minarets is much poorer than I expected, and Byzantine architecture presents such sameness that it wearies.

Two large iron girder bridges on wooden piers, and with wooden platforms, which open to let ships through, connect Galata and Stamboul. In the centre of the latter town rises a lofty round tower, called the Seraskeriat, from the top of which various signals are given to the people, especially when a fire occurs, and the same thing is done from the Genoese Tower on the heights of Galata. This tower is large, massive, and round, a fine object in the landscape, worthy of the eminent nation that caused its erection.

The finest and most important mosque in Stamboul is, of course, St. Sofia. Originally built by Constantine, it was restored and beautified by several of the Greek Emperors. The building is in form a parallelogram; the roof, a succession of small domes rising to one large dome in the centre, which is supported by walls and pillars in the inside, forming the nave of the church. The large dome is very well constructed. It was once destroyed by an earthquake, but rebuilt with the same material—a small red brick. The interior is covered with mosaics, and beautifully gilt. Columns of rich marble, taken from

ancient heathen temples at Rhodes, Athens, and other places, support the galleries and the roof. The Turks have taken pains to obliterate all Christian signs in the church, but in many places, and especially in the roof over the altar, where the head of the Saviour is dimly seen, are the marks of the ancient worship for which it was built. It was distressing to see the ruin some of the mosaics had been allowed to fall into, to be offered by the mollahs (priests) a handful of the richly-coloured cubes, and to witness the dirty and heedless way in which this magnificent Byzantine monument is kept by the Turks. In a mosque, situated not far from the Top Kapousi Gate, near the fortifications, are some wonderful mosaics of the early Christian times. They are on the roof and walls of the vestibule, extending over the whole front, before entering the inner nave of the edifice; they appear to have been whitewashed over, so escaping the notice of the Turks—an earthquake cracked the walls (and damaged the mosaics), thus exposing them to view. Now the mollah shows them with readiness, and informed us they were reverenced by his congregation. They represent the miracles of our Saviour, and there are large-sized heads of the Virgin and the Apostles. The colours are very fine, and the drawing better than usual.

We rowed up the Golden Horn to the "Valley of Sweet Waters," named so in satire I presume—as originally its name was Marcidum Mare, or the Putrid Sea—which the brackish and dirty water more resembles. The valley is formed by one of the streams which runs into the head of the Golden Horn, and under the plane trees growing on its banks the Turkish ladies assemble on Sunday afternoons in spring, while the river is covered with boat-loads of sight-seers. At the top of the valley Abdul Aziz built a beautiful palace or kiosk, and made fountains and gardens. Alas! they are now all neglected, unoccupied, and falling to ruins—yet it is not five years since his death!

We crossed over to Scutari on the Asiatic side. It is a large and increasing suburb, preserving entirely the Asiatic characteristics in its streets, and avoiding the introduction of European customs or habits. The streets are more tortuous and worse paved, if possible, than in Stamboul, but the people appeared more civil and obliging. There was less of the Jewish element among them. Having been told we *must* see the Howling Dervishes, we went to a small mosque, where accommodation is provided for the visitor in a gallery railed off from the centre of the nave of the mosque, which is about thirty feet square.

In the opposite gallery were many native spectators also. The altar was in the centre of the mosque, with a looped-up curtain in front of it, on our right. When a devotee entered, he stopped in front of the altar, bowed low, and ranged himself with a line of men, all differently clad, who stood at the further side on our left, facing the altar. In front of them sat two or three old men, reciting from time to time, in a loud voice, passages of the Koran ; and by their side stood some children, apparently being instructed in this peculiar worship. The men in line start in motion, bowing to the right and to the left, throwing their heads back with a jerk, bending forward, repeating this exercise to a sing-song tune—"Allah-il-Allah" (God is God)—each syllable being pronounced at each several motion. Every time the priest read the Koran they quickened their pace until bathed in perspiration, and giddy with exertion they eased into an idiotic shuffle, and some retired in collapse, when others immediately took their places, and the scene commenced anew. All the time a priest in red garments waited on each performer when required, exchanged his red fez for a white linen one, his thick robe for a cambric shift, and each garment he took from the Dervishes he reverently laid on the floor before the altar. The absurdity

of this ceremony is about as bad as the effluvia which arise, and the visitor soon sickens at the sight.

We drove through Scutari to the Turkish cemeteries, which extend an enormous distance, and look dreary enough with the hundreds of thousands of gravestones and groves of cypress trees. Here all the true Turks, even those living in Stamboul, with Asiatic instinct desire to be buried. Having visited the English cemetery, which is very well kept, and in beautiful order, we wondered at the taste of our countrymen who erected Marochetti's hideous design in the centre of the gardens to "The British Army." Passing the huge barracks by the shore, which were Miss Nightingale's Hospital, we returned by steamer to Galata, and had a good view from the boat of the little gate close by the shore at Seraglio Point. This is the extreme point of the triangle on which Stamboul stands, and is the famous gate through which the bodies of thousands have been thrown into the current of the Bosphorus. A causeway leads from the Seraglio prison to it, and here Janissaries, Greeks, fallen beauties, and Bulgarians, *cum multis aliis*, have found their last resting-place.

Who has not heard of the dogs of Constantinople? These lazy brutes, generally covered

with filth and disease, lie about the streets and let you walk close to their noses without disturbing themselves, and at night they roam about, waking every person unaccustomed to their habits by their barks and howls. After hearing a tremendous fight amongst these dogs, the vanquished retreat with such a chorus of shrieks that the wakened slumberer delights in thinking that at last "one dog has had his day," or met with his deserts, and that there will be peace amongst the canine population. But no! Before you can get to sleep another row has begun, and similar howls follow. Custom alone, with these and other extraordinary noises, enables the traveller to have a good night's sleep in Constantinople. One soon gets familiar with the dogs, but one night I was awakened by a man beating a gong and crying: "Yo-ha-hi-he-ha," or some such unearthly yell, below the window. He went down the street a few yards and repeated the noise, and I heard him making the night hideous as he went. Upon inquiry in the morning I found that there had been a fire in a suburb of Pera, and it was the custom when one occurred for a man to go round waking up the populace in this manner, informing them where the fire was, so that, if you had any relatives in that quarter, you could go to their assistance.

The bazaars in Stamboul are an attraction for Europeans from their curiosity. They were built by the Greeks, and are long passages covered over by thickly-built vaulted roofs, which happily keep out some of the heat. On either side are small shops, in front of which the merchant generally sits. Different parts of the bazaar are allocated to the various trades, carpet merchants, goldsmiths, curiosity mongers, etc., but the grocers have a bazaar lower down the town to themselves, and it is by far the cleanest and best kept. The Pera shops are usurping the trade of the bazaars; and, beyond the fancy of seeing the ancient emporium of trade, there is little inducement now for undertaking a hot walk to the bazaars.

The most interesting sight in Constantinople is the fortifications. A drive through the old town of Stamboul leads one through narrow streets, where it is astonishing to see a tramway and still more unpleasant to meet a car. Ancient overhanging houses, with a central projecting window, at which the family (seeing but unseen) sit during the afternoon, the windows barred with ironwork of curious design and excellent workmanship, line the road up to the Seven Towers, which are almost on the Sea of Marmora. The ramparts commence here and continue to the

Golden Horn across the promontory. It is said that Constantinople has been besieged twenty-four times, and taken six times. But since the year 668 A.D. it has been invested by the Saracens or Arabs twice, on the first occasion by land and sea for seven years. In 865 A.D. the Russians first commenced their attacks. Again in 905 and 941 A.D. they returned, and the following year also, but always were foiled in their attempts. In 973 A.D. they made their first formidable invasion by land and sea, and got as far as Adrianople, but were eventually completely defeated. It was after this expedition that the Russians were converted to Christianity, through Olga, the mother of Swatislas, the reigning Tsar. The city was attacked and plundered by the Crusaders, and recovered by the Greeks in 1261, after the Latins had held it for fifty-seven years. It was first assaulted by the Turks, to the number of 200,000 men, in 1422—and some years after it fell into their hands—so that in comparatively modern history these famous walls have signalised the talents of their original Roman founders by withstanding ten important sieges by different nations, two of which only succeeded. There they are, battered and time-worn, just as when the Mussulman effected a breach in them, never having been repaired, or maintained efficient by

the conquerors—monuments of the great men of the Roman Empire. There was one part of the fortifications, however, which the Turks did keep in repair, and this was the Seven Towers—a collection of large round and square towers of that number enclosing a quadrangle.

Dungeons had been excavated under the base of the towers, and to one of these the Turks used to send the Ambassadors of foreign countries (even until the end of the first quarter of the present century) if they in any way displeased those bloodthirsty rulers, and so great appears to have been the dread Europe held them in, that very little notice seems to have been taken of such discourtesy, which would almost be forgotten except for the pathetic inscriptions carved on the walls by the unfortunate prisoners. The view from the Seven Towers is magnificent, and from them the walls extend northwards in almost a straight line to the Golden Horn. The fosse is dry, and gardens occupy its space. The first line of walls is almost obliterated, but the back wall, with its lofty towers, built of mixed courses of stone and small bricks, still standing nobly up, shattered and crumbling, but preserving their outward form which Constantine gave to them more than 1,550 years ago. Along the outside of the walls runs a paved road, very rough in parts, also

the work of the Romans. The paving is absolutely indispensable in the wet seasons, but the Turks take no trouble to maintain it, although a most necessary route for the delivery of supplies to their capital. We drove down this road, the town to our right enclosed in the walls, nothing to be seen to our left but occasional cemeteries, with their cypress trees, and a few gardens. About half-way we reached the Top Kafonsi, or crooked gate. Here the ground undulates very much, and this was the spot where Mahomet gained his entrance. The breaches have never been repaired. The walls extend for five miles along the base of the triangle, from the Sea of Marmora to the Golden Horn. I must not forget to mention the peculiar birds which fly up and down the Bosphorus. They are in colour like the gray plover, their flight like a swallow, about the size of a teal, and in never-ending succession they stream noiselessly along the surface of the water from daylight to dark—sometimes in small coveys, frequently in bevies of many hundreds. The wonderful thing about them is that they are never seen to turn. Coming into the Bosphorus from the Sea of Marmora, they fly in a continuous line through to the Black Sea, and there I watched many "packs" flying past the lightship (fourteen

miles from the mouth of the Bosphorus), still following the same straight course. I watched these birds frequently, and made inquiries of others, but never saw or heard of any one seeing them turn or stop to rest on their course. I saw a large flight of them one afternoon opposite Scutari avoid a steamer in the channel, and unexpectedly meet another ship coming from the opposite direction. They wheeled to let the steamer pass, and then resumed directly their original course, following apparently the leading bird with military regularity. The Turks have a legend that these birds are the spirits of the departed, and some go so far as to name them the souls of the divorced ladies from the harems who now fly on the Bosphorus, the waters of which have been the receptacle of many banished wives and concubines.

Spirits or not, there is something strange and fascinating in the ceaseless flight of these curious birds. Their numbers must be extraordinary, when one considers the distance they travel and the continuous succession in which they fly past. I presume they live on flies or insects on the surface of the water, as they skim so close to it; but where do they roost? and where are their nests and habitation? Not on the Bosphorus.

Since writing the above, I came across (while turning over the books in Prince Woronsoff's

library at Alupka) a narration of a journey from Constantinople by the Rev. Dr. Walsh, written in 1827, and published in 1828, and found the following passage, which refers to these birds: "There is a bird in this country which has often excited my surprise and curiosity, and which, I believe, is peculiar to this place. Every day are to be seen numerous flocks of birds, not quite so large as pigeons, with dark backs and white bellies, passing up and down the Bosphorus with great rapidity. When they arrive either at the Black Sea or the Sea of Marmora, they again wheel about and return up the channel; and this course they continue, without a moment's intermission, the whole of the day. They are never seen to alight either on land or water; they never, for a moment, deviate from their course or slack their speed; they are never known to search for or take any food; and no visible cause can be assigned for the extraordinary and restless instinct by which they are haunted. The French call them 'les âmes damnées' (the condemned spirits); and certainly, if being allowed no cessation or repose be included in the idea, it is not misapplied. They fly very near the surface of the water; and if a boat meet a flock of them transversely they rise a few feet over it; if directly, it divides them like a wedge. Their

flight is remarkably silent, and though so numerous and so close, the whirr of their wings is scarcely ever heard. I have often wished to shoot one to examine it; but the Turks have such a tender and conscientious regard for the life of every animal but man, that no person is permitted to kill any bird upon the Bosphorus without incurring their displeasure."

The only difference in my observations and Dr. Walsh's, is his remark that the birds turn when reaching either sea; but I certainly saw many of them still continuing their flight twenty miles from the land in the Black Sea.

I visited the Sultan's stables and saw a quantity of Arab horses—the well-shaped ones all very small, and the tall horses short in length and leggy, as if a cross, and not of the true Arabian breed. Some fighting sheep, kept shaved and ready for action when called upon, were tethered in the stable-yard, reminding me of those to be seen at every Nawab's palace in India.

We left Constantinople at two o'clock on a sultry day, and steamed up the Bosphorus, the scene looking glorious in the sparkling sun. How long will the Turks continue paramount over this lovely spot? This is a question which many have asked in days gone by, and which men ask still. That they are losing ground fast, are hovering between

Asiatic and European customs, with leaders weak and inefficient to grapple with the crisis, are patent facts. The danger of any sudden convulsion which might raise their ancient fanaticism is feared by some, but although to a certain extent there is a risk of this, in my opinion the majority of the Turkish nation are too crushed in spirit and divided amongst themselves to ensure an extended fanatical movement. The problem is not so much what will become of the Turks as who will succeed them at Constantinople. It is difficult enough to arrange for their transport to Asia, but who is to be master of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus? The Turks are not so bad as their rulers, and if the latter could be improved there might still be a future for the Ottoman Empire. I had an interview with a Pasha, who, though a Greek, had held high office, and was one of the Commissioners of Turkey at the Treaty of Berlin —he is now put aside from jealousy, I suppose; but no man could speak more loyally of his adopted country than he did, and his argument in favour of giving the Turks under the present Sultan time to carry out the changes which the Berlin Treaty necessitates, and of Europe unitedly assisting with that object, was plausible, on the ground that the policy of the Powers should be to join in directing and improving Turkey, rather

than allow one of their number to upset the equilibrium of nations by acquiring Constantinople. For generations the Turks have traded diplomatically by insinuating this argument, and exciting the jealousy of the European Powers. I had the honour of an introduction to Aleko Pasha, Prince Vogorides, the Governor of Eastern Roumelia. He is a fine-looking man, in the prime of life, with frank and pleasant manner. His account of the condition of the district he rules was glowing in the extreme. Allowing for natural self-praise, there is no doubt that harmony exists there, and that apparently the laws and Constitution of Roumelia are "a success." Too much was not tried to begin with, and the new Constitution will be allowed to walk before it can run. In Bulgaria the project was more ambitious, and an unfortunate collapse has occurred. I met a number of Bulgarians, and, as far as I could gather the opinion of the most intelligent of them, Prince Alexander was obliged to appeal for a revision of the Constitution.* Whether he went the right way to work, or was altogether scrupulous in the conduct of the elections, are other matters, but Bulgaria was impossible as a State under the elaborate Constitution it proposed to adopt.

* This was written in July, 1881.

During past generations, under the baneful rule of the Turks, most of the leading and intelligent Bulgarians left their country whenever they could for Roumania and other parts. They settled, and formed ties which retain them to their new homes. Only the lower orders, and not these upper classes, returned when Bulgaria was freed, and the spirit of corruption instilled from their oppressors seems to have been rampant among the officials elected by the "Vox populi." I questioned several of the peasants in the country, and they apparently were disgusted with the senators, judges, and officials who had been elected, boldly accusing them of ignorance and, in many instances, of dishonesty. Who is M. Zankoff?* When Midhat Pasha was Governor of Rustchuk, he selected Zankoff, who was a junior clerk in the Custom House, to act as a sort of secretary, and the report is he was dismissed after a short time for actions which could not be approved of. He then posed as a Bulgarian patriot, but most of his countrymen whom I met ridiculed him, abused his administration, and many confirmed the truth of the report

* This gentleman, at one time Prime Minister of Bulgaria, fell into disgrace shortly afterwards, and is reported now in 1886 to have been the instigator in the *coup d'état* against Prince Alexander.

that he had stopped and opened several of Prince Alexander's and other people's letters—at all events, the upshot in Bulgaria is that the Prince has secured his majority, and the ratification of his schemes. If he is prudent and just he will be able to develop the country; but he cannot do this without honest administrators, and his first object should be to appoint such men as can be relied upon. He has entered upon a hazardous speculation where he will meet with much criticism and difficulty, and he will soon break down unless the mass of the Bulgarian people see that his Government is honestly administered and maintained.

This is what they require, and let us hope Prince Alexander will be able so to rule as to secure this, and ensure the development and prosperity of the nation. I found in the book mentioned above by Dr. Walsh, the translation of the inscription on the tomb of Constantine. It is now illegible, and in fact was so when Dr. Walsh wrote. The inscription consisted of words composed entirely of consonants, which were unintelligible till Gennadios, the Patriarch, who was appointed immediately after the Turks took possession of the city, interpreted the prophecy by supplying the vowels. It has been looked upon by the Greeks in the light of a prophecy

(part of which only now remains to be ultimately fulfilled) for several hundred years :

On the first of the Indict, the kingdom of Ishmael, he who is called Mahomet, shall overturn the race of the Palæologi, shall gain possession of the seven-hilled city. He shall reign within it, shall subdue very many nations, and shall desolate the islands as far as the Euxine Sea. He shall lay waste those who border the Danube. On the eighth of the Indict he shall subdue the Peloponnesus ; on the ninth of the Indict he shall lead his forces against the countries of the North ; on the tenth of the Indict he shall overthrow the Dalmatæ. Again he shall turn back for yet a time ; he stirs up a mighty war against the Dalmatians, and is a little broken (or crushed), and the peoples and tribes, with the assistance of the Western nations, shall engage in war by sea and land, and shall overthrow Ishmael. His descendants shall reign with less, very little (power). But the yellow-haired * race, together with all their coadjutors, shall overthrow Ishmael, and shall take the seven-hilled (city) with its (Imperial) privileges. Then shall they kindle a fierce intestine war until the fifth hour, and thrice shall a voice shout "Stand ! stand !" and fear (to proceed) make anxious haste ; and on your right hand you will find a man, noble, admirable, and courageous ; him ye shall have for your Lord, for he is my friend, and in accepting him my will is fulfilled.

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* The inhabitants of Russia have always been known as the yellow-haired race in contradistinction to the Franks and inhabitants of the West, who were known as the black-haired race.

THE CRIMEA.

We crossed the Euxine or Black Sea, now delightfully blue and calm, and arrived at Sevastopol on the morning of the 15th of July, the interest which this city inspires in the minds of all Englishmen stimulating our curiosity. The entrance to the harbour of Sevastopol is easy. About a quarter of a mile broad at the mouth, the bay widens out inland and extends nearly eight miles almost due eastwards to the mouth of the river Chernaya. Two large forts, Constantine and Nicolas, stand on either side of the entrance. They are built of stone in two tiers, with port-holes for the guns, but at present there are but few, if any, of the latter in position, and the forts themselves seemed to be in a neglected state. About half a mile from the entrance another bay branches off inland to the south-east, perhaps a mile in width at first, narrowing round in the form of an S for nearly two miles. On the

south-western side stands the city of Sevastopol, situated upon a peninsula formed by the sea on one side and this bay on the other. On the south-eastern side are the docks, barracks, work-shops, and a few houses.

We landed at the wharf, and after breakfast hired a "drosky" and drove out with Captain H., who kindly acted as our cicerone. On either side of the road through the town are the ruins of the houses destroyed by the bombardment and fire. Nothing has been done to repair them; no steps have been taken to restore the city. Passing the point of the bay, we drove up a gorge past the "crick" battery and gained the crest of the plateau overlooking the town. The country around is the same barren, stony, undulating steppe or plain which extends over Southern Russia. After driving two or three miles we arrived at the cemetery of the Light Division, which is alongside the road, surrounded by a neat stone wall enclosing about an acre of ground, which is covered with grass, resembling an English churchyard. We mounted the steps over the wall, and were pleased to find the tombstones and monuments in good order—the grass had lately been mown, and the place was evidently cared for.

Leaving this, our driver proceeded over the

steppe, careless of ruts and stones, and oblivious of the effects on the springs of his master's carriage. Crossing a valley, we arrived at Cathcart's Hill, which, being the highest point of the plateau, commands a fine view. Here was General Cathcart's encampment, the rendezvous of officers during the campaign, where the siege operations could be well seen and discussed. On the summit the British Government have built a house for the resident gardener and caretaker of the cemeteries, and behind it, in a walled enclosure, are collected most of the monuments and tombstones of the officers and men who died in the Crimea. The ground is laid out in beds and gravelled paths—acacias, cherry, apricot, and other fruit trees, vines, lavender, and flowers are tastefully planted. All appear to be flourishing, and the monuments are in good order.

The English cemeteries in the Crimea used to be 135 in number. In 1872 the Government determined to concentrate and protect them—most of the principal tombs were removed to Cathcart's Hill, but the Light Division cemetery and others (eleven in number altogether) were retained. These the guardian has to overlook, and as it is a work of no small labour and difficulty, some being nearly ten miles distant, the pay (£25 a year and his house) is not extravagant

even for the British nation! But the allowance for maintenance is worse; £55 a year is given, and this is hardly sufficient to keep such an extent of walling, together with the obelisks at Alma, Inkerman, and Balaclava, in repair, besides the gravestones. When Cathcart's Hill was finished, the Russian Government generously gave seventy yards of extra ground round the cemetery, and I would suggest that this should be at once properly enclosed and planted. There is hardly a doubt that sooner or later a further concentration of the graveyards will be made on Cathcart's Hill. There is so much pointing with cement to be done to the walls, the extent of them is so great, and the climate of the Crimea appears so deleterious to the durability of stone and the maintenance of lime or cement pointing, that it will be almost impossible to keep all in proper repair with the present allowance. The walls are now comparatively new, but year by year they will certainly require more patching and pointing. The Government should also provide water-tanks, which would be filled by the rain at Cathcart's Hill. The guardian has a considerable distance to go for water and to drag it uphill. Water is absolutely necessary for the trees and plants, and it is hardly to be expected that the man will at present undertake the great labour of

giving them all that they require. He is a German by birth, and seems to take an interest in his work, for which he has been well chosen.*

After lingering on Cathcart's Hill, reading the names of friends known and well remembered, listening to the description of the siege operations and camp life from Captain H., who had been in the service with his regiment here in 1855 and 1856, we went down the valley to refresh ourselves at a splendid spring of water where many a weary British soldier had been before. There were the marks of the tanks made for watering the cavalry horses, and the beams still remaining to secure the sides. The well had been arched over with stones, and the building still stands, the current of water flowing a plentiful stream out of it. These springs of water are common in the valleys of the steppe, and are a "godsend" to the district. We started again in the drosky northwards over the country, crossing the old roads made from one part of the British lines to another. These roads, though grass-grown, can still be traced, and the jolts given by the carriage in crossing them are painful indications of their

* Since this has been written, great improvements have been made at Cathcart's Hill, chiefly through the energy of the late Lord Beresford, who supported the recommendations of the British Consuls at Odessa and Sevastopol.

existence. Numerous round holes show the places where the tents and huts were pitched, while heaps of broken beer bottles and sardine tins lie scattered about. Passing another valley, and a small farm, where stands the old, decayed, round tower of the powder magazine, to prevent the burning of which from a fire in the artillery lines close by, an officer gallantly won the Victoria Cross by climbing on the roof and covering it with wet sacks, we reached the obelisk marking the Battle of Inkerman. The three obelisks at Alma, Inkerman, and Balaclava are similar—of gray granite, on square pedestals about twenty feet high, with a low wall thirty feet square enclosing the spot. On each side of the base of the obelisk is an inscription in Turkish, Russian, Greek, and English, "Erected by the British Army," with the name and date of the battle.

We walked from the obelisk, which is placed in the centre of the battle-field, to the hillock on the right, where General Cathcart was killed. Looking from this place, down the gorge to the north, over the village of Inkerman, one is struck with surprise and admiration at the formidable task attempted by the Russians in climbing that precipitous cliff, and the men dragging the guns up on the eventful night of the attack—the 4th of November, 1854. Who knows what the result

would have been if the general commanding the Russian right wing had not mistaken the valley up which he was to advance, and thereby separated himself from the division on the left? Returning over the steppe between the lines of trenches and parallels, we went to the Redan, walking over the ground, one hundred and fifty yards from the end of the last trench to the fort, which the assailant had to cross. This formidable earthwork, which was taken and lost by the English on the 8th of September, 1855, still preserves its angles and form, notwithstanding the harvest which the search for remnants of shells and balls has yielded to the natives for years past, and induced them to dig over the ground in all directions—although the pursuit has now almost ceased (for these weapons of war are getting scarce). We soon picked up both bullets and slugs, which we carried away as mementoes of our visit. The Malakoff tower is across a valley to the north of the Redan, and it was easy to observe that here the French had the advantage of the British, as their trenches were within twenty-five yards of the Russian works. From the crest of the hills on which these two famous fortifications were placed an admirable view of all the positions can be obtained. It is astonishing to think that these defences of

Sevastopol were made after the battle of the Alma, or to find any excuse for the extraordinary movement of the Allies after that battle from the north side over to the eastern, and for their not at once attacking the town. Kinglake's strictures must be right, and although some consolation is gained by the knowledge that Lord Raglan always wished to attack at once, it is galling to think that, under the false notion of pleasing our Allies, the advice of such a man as St. Arnaud was followed; and that throughout the campaign we played "second fiddle" to the French.

Walking down the hill towards the town we passed the huge barracks, called "The White Buildings," their walls still blackened and bare, a painful ruin! But still more distressing is the sight of the docks close by on the right hand side. A canal from the harbour conducted the ships to them through two locks; they were begun at the end of the last century under the superintendence of an Englishman, Admiral Mackenzie, by order of the Empress Catherine. Another Englishman, Colonel Upton, was afterwards employed. The docks were six in number, situated in a valley, and fed by an aqueduct from the Chernaya, near Inkerman. Aberdeen granite was largely used in their construction, and massive blocks of it

are still to be seen in the floors of the docks, but the sides and entrances were mined and blown up in 1856. What cruel evidence of the horrors of war! *Et cui bono?* Science has enabled another form of dock to be constructed, and Russia can easily, if she so desires, fill Sevastopol harbour with floating docks, pontoons from which the air is extracted, and the largest vessels can be raised high and dry. There lies one below us on which the great yacht *Livadia* has been placed during the last few days, undergoing repair.

The Russian Steam Navigation Company, owning the steamers plying round the Black Sea ports and to Constantinople, have large workshops, wharfs, and yards for their ships below the White Buildings; passing through them we hailed a boat on the eastern side of the harbour, and rowed over to the other side, stopping on our way to see the *Livadia*. Rumour says the present Emperor is disgusted with her, and at the expense (£800 per day) which is incurred in working her three sets of engines; but what a floating palace she is! The furniture and fittings are magnificent; just now the carpets are being rolled up and everything put away. No one knows what will be done with her, but every one testifies to her seaworthy qualities, while lamenting the great cost of fuel which

must be used to drive such a floating castle through the water.

It was a lovely evening; the moon lit up the ruins on either side of the harbour, and looking over them one could not help lamenting the fate and present condition of the place. Poor Sevastopol! Nature has endowed you with all the essentials that make a harbour. The entrance is easy; there is no bar; the water is deep everywhere; there is room for all the vessels of the world; it is the nearest port to the mouth of the Bosphorus; a railway connects it with the corn and vine growing districts of Southern Russia. Yet the warlike spirit of those who rule hesitates to utilise these great commercial advantages. The Muscovite dictators cannot determine upon a policy; torn between two parties, the one wishing to recreate the station as a tower of strength, defended by land and sea from attack, the other desirous of making it a free port, a commercial centre, and a blessing to the country. Will the war party triumph, and turn the place again into a fortress, a formidable menace to Europe, or will the peace party prevail, and allow the natural gifts of Sevastopol to be developed by the merchant and private capitalist? For twenty-five years Russia has watched the ruined walls crumbling in decay, and

been unable to decide. Now they say under the new Tsar the peace party are more hopeful. We heartily wish them success. The modern invention of the torpedo, to the destructive and defensive power of which there appears no limit, should surely enable harbours to be quickly protected without the aid of so many guns and forts. Sufficient protection might be given to the commerce of the place without abandoning it for the sake of a barren stronghold, handed over to the mercies and never-ceasing changes and requirements of modern engineers.

We started next day after breakfast at 9 a.m., and drove by the Yalta Road past a small bay, where vessels at the time of the siege were detained for inspection, and hence it got the name of Quarantine Bay, nearly due south from Sevastopol, about one and a half miles to the ruins of the ancient city of Khersonesus. This city was founded by emigrants from Heraclea 600 years before Christ, and for a long time flourished as a Republic. It was taken by Mithridates the Great, King of Pontus, and fell, on the subjection of his son by the Romans, to their Empire, under which it continued to flourish. It was captured by the Slavonians, and was wrecked, along with the other great colonies of the Crimea, by the Huns and other wild races.

Its final destruction is attributed (so says Mr. Murray's Guide) to Olgerd, the Lithuanian conqueror of Kief and all Southern Russia, in the fourteenth century. When the Turks took the Crimea in 1475, they found Khersonesus "a pile of empty houses and deserted churches." They removed the finest marbles and pillars to Constantinople. The Russians followed, when they built Sevastopol, in taking all the materials they could find, and the French, during their occupation in 1855, further assisted in the work of demolition and desolation. It is a pity that so little is left of what a traveller in the sixteenth century described as the ruins of a "proud, delicate, and illustrious city."

But before describing it I must briefly quote from "Murray" a story taken from Mr. H. D. Seymour's book on the Crimea. It is related by Nestor, and is interesting as attributing to Khersonesus the means of converting the Slavonian race to Christianity. Although that religion had been partially introduced into Russia by his grandmother Olga, yet it had not been generally accepted, when Vladimir, Prince of Kief, besieged Khersonesus in 988 A.D. It was valiantly defended, and though the Russians pressed on the attack they began to lose heart in the contest. During the assault, a certain Athanasius shot into

the camp an arrow bearing this advice—"Thou canst stop or turn aside the springs which are behind thee towards the east—it is thence the waters of the town are brought to us." At this news, Vladimir lifted his eyes to heaven and cried out, "If this be true, I promise to receive baptism." He gave the order to turn off the water, and soon the besieged, worn out and dying with thirst, surrendered. Vladimir then asked the Emperors Basil and Constantine for their sister Anna in marriage, and her hand was given to him on condition of his baptism. The baptism of Vladimir took place in the Church of the Holy Mother of God at Kherson, situated in the midst of the town on the market-place. It is here, near the church, by the side of the altar, that is to be seen to this day the palace of Vladimir and that of the Princess. Immediately after the baptism, the Bishop conducted the Princess for another ceremony, that of marriage. Vladimir ordered to be built a church at Kherson, on the hill made with the earth which the inhabitants had piled up in the centre of the town during the siege, which church, says Nestor, may still be seen in our days. On his return to Kiel, Vladimir determined that all his people should become Christians, and their conversion accordingly took place.

On the site of the old church is now being

built an edifice, which when completed will be one of the finest churches in the country. The ancient walls of Vladimir's chapel are enclosed within it, under the central dome is the font where he was baptized—a square-built hole about four feet deep into the ground. The interior ornamentation remains to be done, and no doubt will soon be commenced, as the church, and the whole place, is held in great veneration, and much care now bestowed upon it, by the Russian Church. We were shown round by an exceptionally intelligent priest, who delighted in pointing out the treasures that had been unearthed and saved. A room in the Superior's house close by was filled with cases containing bracelets, beads, tear bottles, brooches, articles of ancient workmanship in bronze, iron, and some of precious metals, coins, and pottery in abundance, huge amphoræ and marble vases. The priest showed us remarkable stones and inscriptions, some in Greek, others in Latin, of different dates; and alongside of the path leading from the museum to the town cannon balls of various sizes, telling the periods of its wars, lay mixed with broken marble columns and carved Corinthian capitals, emblems of the more peaceful days of Khersonesus.

We walked by the church to the site of the old town, on the promontory between Quarantine

Bay and the sea, and were delighted to observe the careful excavations which were being made. The priest, evidently an enthusiast at the work, pointed out the conduits and water-pipes, the fonts at the corners of the streets, the houses and different roads. He has about twenty men employed in removing the loose earth, and laying bare the foundations. The floor of an ancient church which stood almost at the point of the promontory (where the landing-place and mole are still visible) is uncovered, and some nice mosaics and crosses are to be seen. Pompeii came vividly to our minds, as the resemblance of the streets and houses is great, though Khersonesus may probably claim 600 or 700 years of earlier origin. We heartily wished the intelligent padre success in his archæological enterprise, and bade him good-bye after a most interesting visit to this historical spot. We drove thence by the old walls and ruined aqueduct that used to supply Khersonesus with water, through the French lines, over the steppe, burnt and brown by the summer heat, to the French cemetery. This was finished some years before the English one at Cathcart's Hill, and the trees have grown up well. The French collected all the relics of their countrymen, and placed them in separate sarcophagi, lined round the sides of the enclosure.

On each sarcophagus are the names of the officers, number of men, and their regiment, there interred. In the centre of the cemetery is a large monument, on which are inscribed the names of the generals and superior officers who fell in the war. The grounds are rather overgrown, and the place is certainly not so well kept as the English and Russian cemeteries.

About a mile from the French cemetery is the house which was the headquarters of the British Army in the Crimea, and where Lord Raglan died. It is surrounded by some nice trees and vineyards, pleasantly situated, facing the road from Balaclava. The house and property have just changed hands. The new proprietor had just arrived, but he courteously showed us over the place, and the rooms where mural tablets commemorate the fact of the death of Lord Raglan, and give the names of the commanders-in-chief who succeeded him.

A drive of perhaps five miles along a road made by the English, and still in good order, brought us to Balaclava. Alongside of the road are the remains of the railway which conveyed the stores from the port. The village of Balaclava is almost at the head of the bay, into which a small stream flows. Although narrow, and apparently of little depth, the bay is a marvellous

port. The sides shelve precipitously down, and there is water-way for the largest ships. On either hand steep rocks rise, designed by nature for shelter. The winding shores give picturesqueness, and shut out the view of the sea. We hired a boat, and rowed to the mouth, which cannot be more than one hundred yards across, and as the southern side projects or overlaps, the entrance must be difficult and dangerous in stormy weather; as, alas! our transports found in the memorable gale of November, 1854, when the *Black Prince* and many other vessels were wrecked.

After inspecting some curious caves on the northern side, we crossed over to the southern, and lunched on cold bustard, hard-boiled eggs, and small cucumbers, with a bottle of red Crimean wine, which sharpened our appetites, and derived an extra relish from the enjoyable scenery. I climbed up the rocks, disturbing diminutive crabs peeping from the crevices at every step, and examined the geological formation around me. The great southern plain or steppe of Russia seems to extend, rising in a gradual slope southwards, until reaching this point, where the sandstone that forms the upper crust suddenly thins out, and the igneous agents below have forced other rocks, in all manner of forms and

order, into these great cliffs and precipices. Some say that recent volcanic action has added to the confusion, and certainly a huge mass or seam of black basalt appearing to the eastward is much in favour of this conjecture. Next to this comes the red rock, streaked with siliceous veins, called the Balaclava marble, of which the cliffs on either side of the harbour are composed. Then to the westward, rising in altitude asserting its sway, appears the gray schist, which forms a bold perpendicular headland known to sailors as Balaclava Bluff.

It is a grand romantic place, still and motionless under the summer's setting sun, ourselves apparently the only human beings in the neighbourhood, yet, what stirring events have occurred here! Authorities agree that this was the port of the Læstrigones, mentioned in the Odyssey, where the herald was seized and devoured by the savage inhabitants, and Ulysses narrowly escaped. The lofty towers and ramparts that line and guard the cliffs on the western side were used by the ancient Greeks, and refortified by the Genoese, who took the place from the Scythian sea-robbers, who had made it their stronghold. Taken by the Turks in 1475, and again captured by the Greeks, it seems to have remained un-

known to the Russians, who, in 1854–55, never dreamt that England's fleet could here anchor in safety, and that such a harbour existed on the Crimean coast.

On the ruins of the Genoese fortifications there are written in bold capital letters, apparently to remain as long as the walls, the names of some of the English ships, and the designations given to the various points and places. The sailor who climbed the walls and painted "Antelope" thereon must have borne a resemblance to that animal, and known that time alone would efface his handwriting. These remnants of ancient black letter, and the heads of the old oak piers to which the vessels were moored, stern to shore; a few beams worked into the cottages, with the broad arrow to be seen on them, are all the evidences left of a place that played so important a part in this strange chapter of English history. A plain white cross by a well on the hill-side, some three hundred yards from the shore, is called by the natives "Florence Nightingale's Cross," and is a conspicuous object—why so named, I could not learn. We walked through the dirty little fishing village, and, entering our drosky, drove up the valley about two miles, and gained the plain where the famous charge of Balaclava was made. The country undulates easily. The

Tartars have no hedges to their fields, and had lifted most of the hay. The summer sun had baked the ground, so we were able to drive up the incline to the battery which the Light Division charged, and where the monument now stands to mark the spot. The battery preserves its form and outline more correctly than any of the others in the Crimea, perhaps because, the soil being better, it is covered with long herbage.

The country from this point descends northwards, and, finding a fair cart track, we drove along it down the vale to the River Chernaya, and by its banks to the village of Inkerman, chiefly remarkable for the extraordinary caves and dwellings cut in the sandstone rock, of which the hills on both sides are composed. The stone is mostly very soft and easily worked, but some of it is harder, and, as a capital building material, is therefore largely used. On the south bank are a number of caves still occupied by a tribe of gipsies, and on the north bank the base of the rock is honeycombed with ancient caves, the inhabitants of which prehistoric dwellings were called "Troglodytes." Cut in the cliff is a crypt containing a church, the steps to which are hewn in the rock, and an inner staircase leads from the nave to the belfry above—the effect being as if a picture of a church and campanile had been

painted on the white rocks. After a most pleasant row for a mile down the River Chernaya (in a boat which we had ordered to be there from Sevastopol in the morning), we entered the Bay of Inkerman, which extends fully four miles in length, and reached Sevastopol, refreshed by the cool evening breeze blowing in from the Euxine, just as the sun disappeared in the west.

The Russian cemetery is on the north side of the harbour, and fully half a mile from the shore—on the slope of a hill facing the south, containing ten or twelve acres of ground. It is well laid out with paths and trees, which were planted thirteen years ago, and being well supplied with water, which is conducted to the cemetery by pipes, have grown admirably. On the top of the hill stands the memorial church, with a gigantic cross of green Finland marble on the top of it. Slabs of the same stone, with the names of the regiments engaged in the campaign engraved thereon, are let into the walls round the church. The inside is profusely decorated with mosaics and pictures of sacred subjects. Those painted on the walls are unfortunately becoming mildewed, and some are nearly effaced. This is deplorable, as they are works of art, and were designed by the best artists in the country. On the terrace outside are several old cannons with "G. R."

upon them, which were taken from the Turks at the battle of Navarino. Why placed here is unaccountable, except that some of the Russians believe they are trophies taken from the English in the Crimea—and which of the Georges showed his munificence in giving them to the Sultan of Turkey, history does not tell.

By a Tartar village at the head of a small bay, an offshoot from that of Inkerman, we met some fishermen mending their nets, and soon engaged them for five roubles (about eleven shillings) to drag the bay, the bargain being that we should take as many fish as we wanted and leave them the rest. Both ends of the net, which bellied out into a bag terminating in a point in the centre, were attached to long ropes, one of these was held by a man on shore, the boat was rowed out to the length of the rope, then turned parallel with the shore, and the net paid out from the stern. This done, they came in with the other rope. Two fishermen at either side dragged the net in, joining alongside of each other as soon as possible to bring the ends of the net forward, and when landed the bag produced red mullets, numbers of small fish, dace, shrimps, little sea-horses, jelly fish, sea eels, and ugly sea serpents about ten inches long. We had another "shot" with the net at a place where salmon were

reported to be caught sometimes, but did not get one, although we had a larger haul of all sorts of fish. We took a basketful of the dace, mullets, and shrimps, and tried the first-named fried as whitebait for dinner. They were pronounced not good, but the mullets (not so large or rich in flavour as the Italian or English ones) and the shrimps were both deemed excellent at breakfast.

I met an English engineer employed in the Steam Navigation Company's works at Sevastopol, and he told me that frequently unexploded shells were found about the batteries and amongst the ruins. Although care was taken in examining them, one had burst recently while being melted down with other pieces of iron, and two men had been killed, so that now all the projectiles brought in by the Tartars are heated in a cauldron especially prepared, so that if any burst no person can be hurt. I must not be accused of repeating "travellers' tales" in mentioning the following, which was told me by a gallant officer. He had visited lately the scene of his encampment in the Crimea in 1855, and while excavating the site of his tent, where he remembered some provisions had been stored, he unearthed sardine tins as clean and bright as the day they were buried, and the contents as fresh as they could have been twenty-six years ago! I cannot answer for this

as I did not taste them, but I saw a great curiosity in some relics from the wreck of the *Black Prince*. This vessel had a large quantity of specie on board, and some time ago a company was formed to try and secure it. Divers reached the vessel in fourteen or fifteen fathoms of water, but could not find the gold. However, they brought up some willow pattern china plates, pots of marmalade, Bass's beer, and sherry in bottles. The beer burst soon after being brought to the surface, but was still good, and the sherry excellent. The plates and other thing were shown to me.

No one visiting Sevastopol should fail to see General Todleben's house, which was given to him by the people, and handed over by him to the town as a museum for relics of the war. The collection of guns and weapons is most interesting, the maps and pictures of the siege explain much to the traveller; and a curious series of the prints that appeared in the English and French illustrated papers at the time of the campaign, bring reminiscences of that period vividly to the mind, while, at the same time, they show, by comparison, the extraordinary strides in excellence made in the character and finish of the specimens of the lithographer's art produced by the illustrated journals of the present day.

The country of Crim-Tartary had always been associated in my mind with that of a barren, desolate waste, with rude inhabitants of the nomadic class living with their flocks and herds, but it is far different to this over the greater portion of the peninsula. The northern and western sides are the continuation of the steppe of Southern Russia, but more undulating and broken into valleys. The southern and eastern sides enjoy a different climate; the mountain scenery is magnificent; every sort of plant and fruit appears to flourish; it is thickly populated by a thriving, well-to-do race, and is a delightful country. The rise in the ground southwards is hardly perceptible as one crosses the steppe until reaching the crest, where the craggy rocks descend precipitously, and the sea lies nearly 4,000 feet below.

Although in the middle of summer, the steppes, called by the natives "yailas," or plains, look brown and arid, yet there is some fine pasture upon them, and especially on the higher parts, where the herbage is very similar to the English downs. A traveller going by rail from Sevastopol to Batchiserai, which was the old Tartar capital of the Khans of the Crimea, and which contains the only few interesting mosques and relics of Turkish rule in the peninsula, should ride from

that town across the yaila by the drove road to Yalta, about seventy versts, or fifty miles. After passing through the valley of Kokos, the steppe stretches far away on every hand. Herds of Merino sheep and cattle are to be seen here and there, mostly in the vicinity of a farmhouse and enclosure, surely situated in a valley where springs of water are to be found. Trees are rarities, and there is little to break the monotonous landscape but occasional masses of limestone, rearing themselves in layers above the general level of the plain. At last there appears to the south a broad point higher than any ground around, and as one approaches, more rocks appear. Stiff crags, peculiarly stratified, overhang a small valley and shelter a thicket of beech, oak, and some Spanish chestnut trees. Crossing this and ascending the point, a marvellous sight is opened out. This is the top of Ai-Petri, or the hill of St. Peter, 4,000 feet above the level of the sea. Its southern face descends sheer down, and by leaning over a stone could be dropped perpendicularly many hundred feet. To the east and west can be seen the cliffs formed by this sudden termination of the steppe, and as Ai-Petri juts out furthest to the south of any, the whole range of the coast from the head of the Baidar Valley near Balaclava on the west

to Sudak, a hundred miles eastwards, can be traced. Every part of this is covered with firs, and oaks, and trees of all descriptions, vineyards and orchards are mapped out down to the sea-shore; villages nestle in the valleys, while behind to the north there is nothing but the great plain, almost lifeless and bare.

The breadth of this strip of fertility varies greatly. At Ai-Petri the distance to the sea is probably not more than four miles, while in places the steppe breaks off sooner, and the width of the vale to the coast must be fully fifteen or even twenty miles. Alupka, the residence of Prince Woronsoff, one of the largest owners of lands and vineyards in these parts, lies close to the sea below Ai-Petri, and the view over the lovely gardens and terraces around it is not the least pleasing portion of the scene. I walked about the edge of the cliff, peering over at the giant aiguilles, which from below appear like small spikes, and found pieces of lava, little nodules of stone, as if the refuse of Vulcan's Titanic cauldron. A splendid specimen of the golden eagle passed close to me, and a small white-breasted eagle was circling by the rocks in search of his evening meal, disturbing a group of gray-backed carrion crows from what they had evidently found for their repast. There is only a difficult and dan-

gerous path down the western side of Ai-Petri, so I retraced my steps northwards, passing the valley before mentioned, where I observed several holes in the ground, some fifteen yards in diameter, of great depth, and with perpendicular sides. These seemed very like extinct craters, as if attempts had been made to force the overlying limestone in many places before it had given way, and thus formed the crags at Ai-Petri. I was not geologist enough to decide, but only to wonder at the works of Nature around me.

The turf hereabouts is full of strawberry plants, different to the small conical wild berry of the woods, round in form, as large as a filbert, and most sweet to the taste. We had a grateful feast of these as we walked back nearly a mile to join the Batchiserai road, which descends the hill in a succession of zigzags to Yalta. This road was partly made by the late Empress of Russia, and is well engineered. It passes through splendid pine forests, affording lovely views of the scenery all round, and joins the post road close to Livadia.

From time immemorial the southern coast of the Crimea has attracted the attention of different nations—the Greeks colonised and founded many cities along it—the Kings of Pontus and Persia were candidates for its possession—the Romans

here found one of their numerous fields of enterprise—Scythians and Slavonians, Goths and Huns, battled with the Venetians and Genoese for possession of the ports and strongholds. Turks and Greeks continued the contest until the Russians joined in and finally secured the whole of Crim-Tartary by the Treaty of Kujuk Kainardji in 1774, and by a subsequent treaty ten years later in the reign of Catherine the Great. The caves of the Troglodytes, the ancient "livers in the rocks," the aborigines of the country, are to be seen in many places, as well as Cyclopean fortifications on the Ai-Udagh and other mountains, which, from their formation, are believed to have been the strongholds of these people, called by some the Tauri, or Tauro-Scythians. But it would certainly appear as if a race of beings had existed in the country before the Scythians peopled it, and some writers have hinted that fossil bones, or traces of prehistoric men, should be found in the caverns and grottoes which were their abodes.

In the Chatyr Dagh Mountain there is a large stalactite cave (Bimbash-Koba, or Cave of a Thousand Heads), where an immense number of human bones were found; but these are supposed to be the remains of some unfortunate Genoese who were smoked to death by the Tartars. But

leaving the question of the aborigines undecided, one marvels at the numerous mementoes left along the coast by the different nations who successively visited it. Khersonesus, Cembalon (Balaclava), Kaffa (Theodosia), and Ponticapium are known to have been Greek colonies, Gorzubita (Urzup) and Aluston (Alushta) were Roman settlements, while the Genoese and Venetians occupied and improved all these, and pushed their communications and possessions into many other parts of the peninsula.

Several villages and other places, such as Parthenite and Cape Parthenike, derive their names from the virgin divinity of the Tauri, and it is curious to see how the name has been handed down. The Tauric barbarians worshipped the goddess Parthenos, and all strangers shipwrecked on the coast were sacrificed to her. Mr. Seymour supposes that "when the Greeks arrived from Heraclea, they brought in the worship of Hercules and Diana, and as they always respected the religion of the countries they visited, and found a great resemblance between their own Diana and the Virgin of the Tauri, they probably merged the two into one under the name of the Tauric Diana, discontinuing the ancient barbaric custom of offering human victims." In this way probably the name has been preserved in so many

instances, and the sites, with their remains of the old places of worship, are to be found. The Greeks began their settlements and colonies as early as the sixth century B.C., being continually at war with the aborigines—and it is curious to note that the Crimea was one of the few parts of Russia known to the ancients. It is mentioned in connection with the expedition of the Argonauts, and the Trojan war, having been overrun by a tribe of Scythians from the north-east; it was called Chersonesus Taurica, and its people Tauric Scythians—whose famous king, Skiluros, governed about a century before the Christian era. The site of Skiluros' city, Neopolis, is not accurately ascertained, but most probably it stood on the banks of the River Salghir, near Simpheropol, nearly in the centre of the peninsula, as there are tumuli and ruins of an ancient city here, and articles with the name "Neopolis" upon them have been found. Mithridates the Great, King of Pontus, conquered the Scythians in the early part of the first century, and the Romans succeeded to the possession of the Tauric Chersonese on Cæsar's defeat of Pharnaces at the battle of Zela, in Asia Minor.

A most interesting work has been published by Mr. H. D. Seymour, entitled, "Russia on the Black Sea," which gives an excellent history

of the Crimean Peninsula. He discovered in the caves of the Troglodytes crosses and altars excavated in the rocks, showing that they had been the refuges of Christians, probably Arians, fleeing from the persecution of Justinian; numbers of Roman coins of this emperor, and others, especially of the third and fourth centuries, are found. One of the most curious places in the country is Chuput Kalé, near Batchiserai, which was a colony of the Karaim Jews, a sect peculiar to the Crimea, who follow the law of Moses and reject the tradition of the elders; "it is called Kyrkor, or 'forty men,' and the Jews affirm that it was built by forty brothers. It was known in the middle ages (and to Eastern writers in the fourteenth century) as the town of 'Forty Places,' or 'Forty Castles.' The monuments (one of which was found to be 2,000 years old) in the cemetery of Chuput Kalé, called the Valley of Jehoshaphat, prove that the town existed some centuries before the Christian era, and that in the eighth century it was the residence of Isaac Sangari, who converted the Khazan to Judaism. The Karaim Jews are of opinion that Chuput Kalé was founded about 400 years before Christ, also that it was the refuge of the last of the Khazars in the eleventh century."

Near this is the rock of Mangup, which is

fortified with walls and towers, an acropolis, with the remains of a splendid palace. Within it are the only traces left of the Gothic dukes of Mangup, who long held this part of the Crimea. After them came the Huns and the Khazars, but most of the seaboard still remained under the control of the Byzantine Greeks. Vladimir subdued the country by his conquest of Khersonesus in 988 A.D. Then came the Polovtses. In the thirteenth century the Tartars overran the peninsula, and the same era brought the Venetians and Genoese, who founded colonies and kept the Tartars in check until the fifteenth century. The latter then formed a "horde," placing themselves under the suzerainty of the Turks, and by a common effort, in 1475, extinguished Genoese dominion in the Tauric Chersonese. As before mentioned, it was formally annexed to Russia on the 20th April, 1783.

The native Tartars are a quiet, thrifty race, and well-to-do. They might take in more land, but the majority are contented to work a small portion with the aid of their families, and do not push their possessions. They prefer to grow corn, maize, and tobacco on their own fields, generally leaving the cultivation of the vine to other proprietors; but they work in the vineyards and get good pay. The high cheek bones

and bullet heads of the generally accepted Tartar are not distinguishing marks of the race in these parts. Their features are good, and no one can help remarking the number of handsome faces to be met everywhere. With complexions tanned by the sun, which the little "pork pie hats," covered round with Astrakhan or lambs' wool, they all wear (though some have the Turkish fez) do nothing to shade, their skins are as white as those of any other Europeans. There is hardly a doubt that they are descendants of the ancient colonisers of the coast, and that Greeks, Romans, and Italians are answerable for their "good looks." The Russians of all degrees have chosen this district as a resort for health and pleasure, and it is becoming yearly more popular. Steamers run three times a week from Odessa, touching at Sevastopol, Yalta, and Theodosia. An excellent road traverses the south coast from Balaclava, by Yalta, to Alushta, and round to Simpheropol, and agreeable excursions can be made in the mountains on ponies. The principal town and summer resort is Yalta, situated on the shores of a fine bay of the sea, and in an amphitheatre of splendid mountains. Its history is rather shrouded in mystery. Charters of the Patriarch at Constantinople say that Yalita or Gialita belonged in the fourth century to the

Patriarchs. In the twelfth century Ibn Edvizi, the Arabian geographer, speaks of Galita or Djalita as inhabited by the Comans or Polovtses, and it is known that in the fifteenth century the Genoese had a special consul here. Now villas and hotels are springing up, making Yalta a gay and fashionable place.

About thirty-five miles eastwards along the coast from Yalta is the small Tartar village of Alushta. The road after ascending the hill by Massandra, winds round the valley above Urzup, the ancient Gorzubita, which is situated in a bay at the foot of a fertile vale, famous for the growth of tobacco, flanked on the east by the mountain of Ai-Udagh, or the Bear Mountain (so called from its resemblance to a huge bear, as if recumbent and lapping the water). Two detached rocks rise from the sea in the bay, as if to assist in forming a harbour, which is, however, only used by ships in the primitive way of being loaded from the shore. Gorzubita was patronised by the Romans, and here the Emperor Justinian built a large castle. The Genoese enlarged its fortifications with a second line of defence, which is easily distinguished from the Roman work among the ruins of both.

Leaving Gorzubita and Ai-Udagh on the right hand, the road still ascends and passes

through a gorge called by the Tartars "Temir Khapu," or the Gate of Iron, and here the ancient Tauri had one of their fortresses, admirably placed to defend any approach along the coast from either side. A little to the south-east of the road are vast masses of rock thrown in confusion on the top of one another, and everywhere proofs of violent volcanic action are found, easily to be traced, for on leaving this collection of "fetid black limestone" and ascending the hill, about a mile to the left a large crater is visible, and the formation of the rocks is granitic. Passing Mount Castela, covered with scrub of beech, oak, and mountain ash, the valley stretching from the giant Chatyr Dagh on the north, bounded on the east by the Hill of Catherine, so called, says our guide, from its resemblance to the form of a beautiful woman, and out of compliment to Catherine the Great, opens out before us, with the village of Alushta on a sloping hillock close to the sea-shore.

Our residence at Alushta was a small mud building on the ground floor of three rooms, a kitchen, and verandah, with small court in front, surrounded by Tartar habitations. These are all built in terraces on the hill-side, the walls of mud plaster upon an interlacing of hazel binders. They have no second storey, and the flat roofs

are used for various purposes. In the summer the male inhabitants sleep there; corn and provender are often stored on them. The night we arrived a great feast to the principal men of the village was given by the Tartar owning the house exactly in front of ours, of which from our verandah we had a good spectacle. A fortnight previously his son had been married, and the father had determined to make a pilgrimage to Mecca, which all true Mussulmans ought to do. Before departing he gave this feast to his neighbours. Punctually at sunset they arrived, mounted to the roof of the house, sat round in circles on mats and carpets, with the pans of food (from which they helped themselves) ready placed at the corners, and in the centre of the roof. The dishes contained boiled rice and meat, cucumbers, pickled and fresh, melons, and fried cakes, very like bannocks. There was no talking over the dinner; every man, after a slight salaam to the host, fell to, silently, as hard as he could. When finished, there seemed an entire absence of conversation and conviviality, while pipes, tobacco, and coffee were handed round. Perhaps as this was a parting feast it was more taciturn than usual. At 8 a.m. the following morning, the Tartar gentleman started for Mecca. A crowd of children from all parts of the village collected at

an early hour, and attracted me to see the ceremony. About half-past seven an "araba" (the native cart on four wheels, which creak horribly and are never greased) came down the lane, his bags and baggage tied into two sacks, with a cord drawn in the middle so as to enable them to be easily thrown over the back of a pony or camel. His mat and rug, pipe and coffee, were placed in it and driven down the hill to the post road, where it waited. The neighbours began to assemble, and a few minutes before eight his son, the young bridegroom, in a dark blue dress with silver ornaments, arm-in-arm with the mollah (priest) on one side, and his father-in-law on the other, followed by a crowd of relatives, arrived, chanting a monotonous ditty. They formed in line before the house. The man came out, and, after some mystic words and exhortations from him and the priest, placed himself between the latter and his son. Standing thus, a more melancholy song was started, and punctually at eight the procession moved off in regular order, the son and others exhibiting signs of great grief, down the hill to the araba, where the devotee was carefully ensconced, and started on his journey, after each one had successively salaamed him and asked his benediction. A number of women, gorgeously dressed, came out of the house after

the procession, but went no further than the lane, where a view of the start could be had, and even here they kept themselves carefully out of sight of their lords and masters, and their faces veiled from prying eyes.

Having received an invitation to join two sportsmen who proposed an expedition against the red deer on the Chatyr Dagh Mountain, I readily accepted, as although rather too early in the season, and the heads barely clean, I wanted very much to see the haunts of this tribe of deer —similar to the Scotch, but having larger heads with more points. They are rapidly decreasing in numbers, I am sorry to say, as the greater part of the forests belongs to different Tartars, and is used by every one as a sort of "common" for pasturage and the supply of timber; but the Russian Government have taken a portion in hand. The late Emperor shot there every year, and it is most strictly preserved. My first requirement was a rifle, and General R., the commandant at Sevastopol, lent me a "Winchester," scarred and marked by the tokens of war, having been taken from the Turks in the last campaign. I tried it at a mark, and found it was well and accurately sighted. Sixteen cartridges are stored in the chamber below the barrel, and nothing could be quicker than the action of reloading.

Excellent ponies can be hired from the Tartars all over the Crimea, and having procured these, I started after supper at 10.30 p.m., accompanied by Mr. W. and his son, from Alushta, and rode six miles to a village in the hills, Corbecklee by name, the moon lighting the mountain path and illuminating the forest. It is a large village on both sides of a steep gorge in the hills. The river flowing down it is wonderfully conducted by cuts and conduits backwards and forwards, on both sides of the valley, to irrigate the fields and orchards. A blast from W.'s horn aroused the canine population, and a response from our brother sportsmen who had preceded us raised "a chorus" which was continued until we reached the house of a wealthy Tartar at the upper end of the village. This abode had been kindly placed at our disposal by its owner, and here we met two gentlemen in official capacities under the Russian Government, who formed our party. They had come on to arrange matters with the Tartars, a number of whom cordially greeted us, and our host invited us to partake of various native dishes, coffee, etc., while tobacco was, of course, plentifully offered. I declined the former dainties, but smoked a cigarette, and after a peep over the country and the sea stretching far below us, the view looking lovely and calm in the cool moon-

light, I pleaded fatigue, and was ushered into my apartment, a large square room with a settee all around it, covered with Persian and Turkish quilts and mats. It was 12.30 a.m. before I curled myself upon an excellent couch made of the above, and notwithstanding the sounds of the conviviality of my companions in the neighbouring apartment, and the chatter of the Tartars outside discussing the proceedings, I was soon fast asleep. At 4 a.m. we were called, and after a cup of hot coffee, mounted our ponies before day had begun to break.

The path we followed led straight uphill towards the Chatyr Dagh, and by 5.30, after brisk riding, we came up with the Tartars who had started some time before us. The sun had just risen, although hidden behind the Catherine Mountain to the east of us, and was gilding the tops of the hills above Kousma Damain to our left. The Tartars, twelve in number, had been chosen as beaters by one Ismail, called by Mr. W. "Le premier Tartare." I regarded him with much curiosity, having heard much of his prowess and skill in stalking and killing deer. The late Emperor never went out shooting except under his guidance, and a fine gold watch, which he was proud of showing and always wore, was a gift from His Imperial

Majesty. Dressed in a whole-coloured suit of dark brown, his lithe, active figure was evidently made for pedestrianism. He wore a tight-fitting tunic and loose trousers, with a girdle of the same material round his waist, the trousers tucked into socks, and circled into a sort of garter from the calf of the leg downwards, which was laced round with strips of strong leather sewed on to a sort of slipper or mocassin, the laces crossed over the leg serving to hold up the shoe and secure the gaiter at the same time. On the rocks and dry ground, it appeared an admirable walking shoe, but, I noticed, on grass and dried leaves he continually slipped. Ismail carried a single-barrel gun, slung by a belt across his shoulders. It does not weigh five pounds, and is a remarkable weapon. He told me it had never left his hand during the day for twenty-five years. He had killed over sixty stags with it, and countless numbers of roedeer, wolves, hares, and foxes. It is about sixteen bore, and carries sometimes a bullet and sometimes shot; the back sight on the stock close by the hammer is beautifully filed and kept bright; the hammer is circular in form, and raised by the thumb exactly as a scissors' handle; the trigger is a knob which starts out with a spring on the hammer being raised, and is let off by pressure upwards. He explained, in answer

to my inquiry, that the reason for this rounding off of the hammer and trigger was to prevent catching in the bushes and underwood. I soon saw how necessary this was, as in ascending any steep ground he used his gun, the butt of which is well lined with brass, as a walking-stick, and frequently as a leaping pole from one rock to another. Dismounting our ponies, Ismail gave directions in animated language to the beaters, and then leading the way we followed him, through a splendid open forest of beech trees, northwards for about a mile. It was six o'clock before we were placed in the first station, each gun about three hundred yards apart, at different passes in the wood. The beaters had four dogs, all evidently a cross between a bloodhound and a collie, with them, and we soon heard the noise of the men and the deep bark of the hounds. The sportsman on my left killed a fine roebuck, and another on my right wounded a wolf, which was subsequently got, but I saw nothing to shoot at. While waiting for this drive I observed the extraordinary effect of the wakening of nature. When we took our stations the sun had not touched the tree tops, a deathlike stillness reigned in the forest, not a living movement was perceptible. In a few minutes, as daylight grew, the hum of insects commenced, and simultaneously

the tap-tap-tap of the woodpeckers was heard on all sides. It seemed as if these birds, of which I watched some beautiful varieties, knew exactly the minute at which to arise in search of their prey. It was amusing to observe the rap like a postman's knock they give to the tree, the knowing look with which they eye the bark, the delight they exhibit in securing the insect, and their triumphant flight to another bough.

The beaters were sent again downhill, and we walked further north, across a splendid open glade nearly a mile square, covered with luxuriant herbage, to other stations. We were now just under the cliffs of the westernmost peaks of the Chatyr Dagh. The great gray schistose rocks rise perpendicularly the last thousand feet out of the surrounding forest, and form a splendid face, which is visible from every part of the Crimea. The Chatyr Dagh is the highest mountain in the peninsula, being slightly over 5,000 feet above the level of the sea, which is scarcely twenty miles distant. Its name signifies in Tartar language "The Tent Mountain," and in ancient days it was called Mount Trapezus. We were again disappointed in not coming across any red deer, but two more roebucks were killed. These animals are exactly similar to those of Scotland and Germany. Our party now divided, and the

dogs were taken up. I followed Ismail, and we cautiously proceeded eastwards, spying the rising ground above us, and anxiously peering down the forest glades, but not a stag was to be seen. At 10.30 a halt was called, and we proceeded to meet our companions (who had been trying to move deer on the higher ground to us), at a spring of water by the edge of the forest, which had been named as a trysting-place for breakfast, a meal which we were all looking forward to. In a very few minutes the Tartars had a fire lit, a leg of mutton, which had been brought in the saddle bags, was cut up into little bits, and stuck on wooden skewers fresh peeled from a neighbouring willow, and turned gingerly above the embers, each Tartar arming himself with a separate skewer. When sufficiently cooked he presented it to whoever of us was ready for the dainty morsel with a profound salaam. The roedeer's fry was cut up and cooked in the same way, and both dishes were excellent, so that full justice was done to them. The water was ice-cold, and with a bottle of Crimean sauterne, no man ever enjoyed a breakfast more.

All this time our cooks touched nothing—neither food nor water passing their mouths, and they did not even smoke! It was the fast of the Ramazan. This Mahomedan festival is held for

one lunar month in July or August, and is determinable by some calendar arrangements ordered by the Prophet. During those twenty-eight days no Mahomedan of full age is allowed to eat, drink, or smoke between sunrise and sunset. He first enjoys a pipe or cigarette, has a glass of water, then a meal of cakes and vegetables. About 12 p.m. he feasts substantially on meat, and just before sunrise has some other refreshment. The rich Mahomedans rest and sleep most of the day during the Ramazan, but to the poorer class the fast is most severe and hard to bear during the nearly fifteen hours of daylight. At twelve o'clock we started again, the Tartars, who seemed thoroughly up to their work, going eastwards to look for deer, and to move them up from the woods to the higher ground where Ismail stationed us.

I soon saw that their efforts would be unavailing. The forest and underwood were too dense with foliage for the deer to leave so secure a retreat; we were too early in the year; the dogs soon got knocked up, but still there was no sign of yielding or lack of keenness in Ismail's efforts, or the Tartars' energy. My companions got slacker, and I pitied them on the rough ground—the Russian's mode of shoeing himself in a light slipper being peculiarly unfitted to the hills, and

comparing unfavourably with the English shooting boots with nails (a pair of which I luckily had, and which excited the approval of the taciturn Ismail). But though I heard deer none came within shot or sight, and after a good try and a hard day's work we ceased our efforts at 6 p.m., having traversed a great breadth of the forest and hill, our only rest having been at breakfast time.

I was unsuccessful in getting a big stag, but enjoyed the sight of these splendid woods—beech, oak, maple, hazel-nut, with very few firs—which extend for nearly forty miles, by five miles broad, around the Chatyr Dagh, and was much pleased with my day. The ponies met us by the side of a stream, where we refreshed ourselves with claret and water, washing down some hard-boiled eggs. I paid the Tartars for their day's work three roubles to Ismail, and a rouble (about 2s. 2d.) to each of the other men. This was above their ordinary pay (which is about seventy copecks or 1s. 6d.), and they were delighted, offering to come another day whenever we liked. I was much struck at the endurance of these men; they had been on the tramp for fifteen hours amid dense thickets and on rough ground, and were ten miles from their village, Corbecklee. They had touched nothing since sunrise, and as I passed

them on the road home, they walked on with the same patient, contented indifference—fagged they were, but not fatigued.

I had ten miles to ride to Alushta, and as I trotted along I thought how soon I should have knocked up without food and water, and how few among the nations of the earth would go through such a day's work as these Tartars had for so paltry a wage. Did Mahomet, in instituting the fast, consider that the human body required change of regimen at this, the hottest season of the year? In these Eastern countries an alteration of food and diet is most beneficial to the health; and, perhaps, the Prophet, who was an "eminent medicine man," if nothing else, contemplated this. The present mode of keeping the fast must, however, be frightfully severe upon the constitution.

I reached Alushta at a quarter to eight, was soon occupied with a good dinner, and had an early start to bed, for which I was fully prepared.

Having determined to visit the forests once more and see if any stags were to be found on the higher ground, I left Alushta in the afternoon of the 22nd of August, and drove by the post road to Simpheropol, about twenty-five miles to a travellers' post station called Taushan Bazar. The road, which is well engineered, crosses with

many turns and twists the high ground between the Chatyr Dagh and Mount Catherine. At the point of the watershed is a famous spring called Kutuzoff's fountain; in 1774 the Turks had landed from their galleys in the bay of Alushta, and having marched up the valley were here met by General Kutuzoff and the Russians; it was at this spot the General received an extraordinary wound—a bullet entering near his right ear, came out below the left temple, destroying the sight of one eye only. Kutuzoff lived till the year 1813. The stone fountain was erected in his honour and in commemoration of his repulse of the Turks.

It was half-past eight before we reached the forester's house about two miles beyond Taushan Bazar, the usual absence of twilight in these countries obliging us to grope our way in the dark after leaving the station. I had appointed to meet Ismail and some Tartars to act as beaters, and was pleased to find them and the ponies at "the tryst." After frying up some cold beef and eggs for supper, the forester, who is a Russian in Government employ, entered into a long discussion with Ismail as to the "campaign" for the morrow; we were to drive a part of the Government forests, for which I had, with difficulty, got permission, but apparently the man whose duty it was to direct the proceedings knew little about

his work, and could do nothing without the Tartars. These foresters are in a very awkward position; living in isolated and distant places, they have to rely for provisions on the Tartars, who are born poachers and know every inch of the country. It is absurd to suppose that one man can look after thirty or forty miles square of forest country, or attempt to stop those who supply him with daily necessaries from poaching. If he tried, they are too numerous for him, and his life would be the penalty for reporting them to the Government. I soon saw that Ismail was forester in everything but the name. After a few hours' sleep we were up as dawn was breaking; the Tartars had already started. We mounted our ponies and rode up a path on the edge of a steep ridge, one of the spurs of the great mountain, for an hour, till we reached a dense oak and maple forest, when we dismounted, on account of the impossibility of riding through it, and following Ismail on foot, gained the northernmost peak of the Chatyr Dagh about six in the morning. The view across the Crimean peninsula, both sides of which seemed to lie almost at our feet, was very grand, and I have no hesitation in saying that there are few such splendid sylvan and panoramic sights as the one from the top of the king of the Crim-Tartary mountains. The herbage is

much superior on the northern side, which must be attributed to the prevalence of oak, maple, and elm trees, the grass growing badly under the beech forests with which the southern side is mostly clothed.

We started a herd of hinds and calves on the edge of a large open glade, and took stations by a pass at the head of an enormous ravine. The Tartars were soon heard commencing at the hour agreed upon some five miles below us, their curious calls to one another (more to avoid being lost than to raise the deer) seeming in the still morning air close by; and this peculiarity of the atmosphere, or the echo, was the safeguard of the deer. They waited, unable to judge where the noises came from, until the men were close to them, and then most of them doubled back. Some few hinds passed, and one large stag with a smaller one galloped across the ravine a long distance down. We tried to cut him off, but never saw him again. After two more attempts to move some deer on the open "yaila," we breakfasted at 11 a.m., and afterwards tried another drive on the north-western side, but again were unlucky. I got a very fine roebuck, and my companion killed a wolf, for which he can draw five roubles from the Russian Government on producing the head. At 5 p.m. we decided to

"give it up," especially as fifteen miles ride back to Alushta was before us. Ismail was in agony at our decision, and could only be consoled by a solemn undertaking on our part to return in a month, when he said the deer would have left the forests and be on the "yailas." He was right in saying we were too early to kill them. The woods, mantled with green, are too sufficient a harbour at this season for these glorious stags. But he was wrong in thinking we should be so unsportsmanlike as to pursue them at a time when they are unfit to kill. Alas! however, this is what the Tartars do. When the "rutting" season commences they get the big stags on the "yailas" and highest ridges, even killing them in the snow at Christmas time, leaving their bodies to rot, and exposing the horns for sale in the nearest bazaar for a few roubles. Hence this breed of magnificent red deer is rapidly being extinguished. I saw several heads of eighteen, twenty, and twenty-two points in houses in the neighbourhood, but in a very short time they will be "things of the past." The Tartars will not submit to game laws, and the Russians are, as a rule, such absurd sportsmen that great difficulty arises in any attempt to preserve the forests; besides, so many interlying parts belong to Tartar communes. I have no doubt

the same system which has procured the destruction of the wolves would preserve the red deer if the judicious services of such men as Ismail were enlisted in the cause; but the Russians seem afraid to attempt any scheme of organisation that is not connected with strict military rule. That some arrangement in regard to the forests is sorely needed is manifest. Fires are continually taking place. A few nights ago the wood on the hill-side above Yalta was burnt down, and the estate of Massandra preserved by the cutting of the timber before the fire reached it. The Tartars paid little attention to the fire (indeed it seemed no one's business to put it out), while five or six hundred acres of fine timber were destroyed.

As it is perfectly clear the south coast of the Crimea owes a great deal of its salubrity and fertility to the prevalence of timber, which is lacking on all its northern and western coasts, one would have thought the Russian Government would interest itself in the subject. But no; the development of the territories they have seems to be the last idea with Russian officials. There are deposits of splendid coal in some of the Crimean valleys which could be easily worked and cheaply delivered. I saw some at Yalta in large blocks, and it compared most

favourably with English coal alongside of it. The merchant informed me the latter was delivered to him 2s. per ton cheaper, though the former came only twenty-five miles, and by a good road to Yalta, which place is many thousand miles distant from England! The Russian Government puts every obstacle in the way of private enterprise, especially in mining, but on this subject I may have a few words to say in another letter.

As I rode back from the Chatyr Dagh the wooded ravine and the tops of Kousme-Damain were visible to the south-west, and I was forced to hear the "really authentic" history of that famous monastery from my guide. For what it is worth, I repeat it: Two very holy men, Kousme and Damain, retired from the busy world, and settled themselves as hermits in a cavern amongst the rocks of this secluded glen, living on herbs, fish, etc., many hundred years ago. After passing much time in mutual consolation, they unfortunately quarrelled, and one killed the other. Horrified at the deed, Kousme prayed without ceasing over Damain's dead body until a vision informed him that if buried in a certain place, blessings would follow; and surely, at the spot where he was directed to inter the corpse, a splendid spring of water instantly

appeared. This well was blessed, and became miraculous for its cures. Kousme lived long, in the odour of sanctity, penitent for his sins, extolling the praises of the departed Damain, amassing presents from pilgrims for the erection of the monastery, and eventually went the way of all flesh, leaving the shrine endowed and sacred to the memory of Damain and himself! This tale, and similar ones, are retailed for the benefit of the curious, while it is astonishing to think how a branch of the Christian Church can attribute belief in them, and that a spring of cold water can attract thousands of pilgrims from all parts, firmly convinced of its healing and spiritually efficacious properties.

On the night of the 25th August the Mahomedan fast of the Ramazan ended, and in the morning the feast of the Beiram commenced. It is continued for four or five days, but the first two days are the principal ones. The Crimean Mussulmans appear to be more open and free in their manners than the members of their creed in other parts. They are delighted to see you in their houses during the Beiram, and eager to show hospitality. The men all go to the mosque dressed in their best, morning and afternoon The women and children, adorned with head-dresses of gilt bands, or coins, in the form of a tiara, and various coloured robes and tunics

of brilliant hue, meet in the centre of the village, form circles and join hands in a lazy sort of a dance to a most monotonous air. There is no affectation or shyness amongst them, all seem happy and contented, while there is an absence of drunkenness amongst the people, which those who rule them would do well to imitate. The Tartar's weakness is tobacco; he grows a good quality, and smokes incessantly small paper cigarettes. They eat an enormous quantity of fruit, especially melons, preferring the variety with red flesh and black pips, which are called water melons, and are at present in full season; they are rather tasteless, but deliciously cold.

Leaving Yalta by steamer at night we arrived early in the morning at Theodosia. This town was founded by the Milesian Greeks 500 years before Christ, and from its being the principal port for exporting grain, was called Theodosia or God's gift. It afterwards became part of the kingdom of the Bosphorus, and was once held by the Romans. Destroyed at the end of the second century, its harbour seems to have been unused until the Genoese purchased it and the territory around, in the thirteenth century, from the Khan Oran Timur. They built a large town and called it Kaffa, which eventually became their principal seat of government in the Crimea. Their chief consul, annually elected by the doge and citizens

of the metropolis, resided here. After the fall of Constantinople, Mahomet despatched Akhmet Pasha with a fleet of 482 galleys to besiege Kaffa, which fell into their hands on the 6th of June, 1475. Under the Turks the city prospered, and in the seventeenth century travellers relate that 400 vessels were to be found in the Bay of Kaffa. The Turks called it Kutchuk Stambul (Little Constantinople), and probably 80,000 people lived there in its palmy days. In 1771 Kaffa was taken by the Russians, who in 1787 made it a district town under its original name Theodosia. The ancient Genoese fortifications were pulled down to build barracks, the Turkish baths were destroyed, and in a very short time almost all the relics of the earlier ages which had survived Tartar administration disappeared under the rule of an ignorant governor of the town; only some few towers, among them one which was consecrated to Pope Clement VI., remain; but all are crumbling in ruins. The hills around look terribly brown and bare, different to the time when covered with cornfields by the Greeks, and later divided into orchards and gardens by the Tartars. The town is now a resort in the summer season as a Russian watering-place, and barely contains 10,000 inhabitants. What contrasts does history often expose!

A VISIT TO BATOUM.

When the Treaty of Berlin was being framed, people were startled to hear of Batoum, that it was to be ceded to Russia, but made a free port; a triumph of Lord Beaconsfield's policy! Curiosity to see the place took us thither, over 300 miles nearly due south from Theodosia. We shipped in the s.s. *Poushkin*—a splendid new vessel, with marble-sided saloons and beautiful fittings, built at Newcastle for the Russian Company—leaving Theodosia at 7.30 in the morning, arriving at our destination at 4 p.m. the next day. In the south-easternmost corner of the Black Sea, on a projecting tongue of low land, formed perhaps by *débris* from the River Tchoruk, which flows into the sea a few miles to the southward, is the little town of Batoum. The land stretches towards the north-east from the foot of hills a mile distant. It suddenly terminates, and the bay dips round to the east till the cliffs are

reached. The entrance round the head of the point is easy; the water is deep close into the shore. The largest ships can enter in all weathers and at all seasons; an important matter, as nearly all the Euxine ports except this one and Sevastopol are closed by ice in winter. The westerly gales are the only ones feared on this coast, and from them the harbour is completely protected. The anchorage is good, and ships can lie within a cable's length of the shore. But Lord Beaconsfield was right when he said there was room for only a limited number of ships. By dredging the bay on the south-east side, however, equally good harbour accommodation to an unlimited extent can be got, and a channel inland could be made for docks by the natural cut of an old river bed with great ease, and at little cost. The orders sent to the Russian forces in the district just before the peace, were to take Batoum at all hazards. Three days before the conclusion of the war, the attempt was made, but failed. Three thousand five hundred Russians were buried opposite to the point (visible a few miles up the coast) after that assault, and although the numbers have never transpired, it is said thirty thousand perished altogether in the various attacks on Batoum. Through a river of blood, backed by admirable diplomacy, they have gained

the only port—the only position—worth having, on this side of the Black Sea. What will they do with it?

The first act, of course, with the Russians has been to arm it. A large fort commanding the entrance at the point of the headland, which was made for the Turks by French engineers in 1863, has been put into thorough order, only requiring guns (ready at the artillery stores just outside the cordon, not a mile away) to be placed in position. The barracks inside the fort are filled with soldiers; the hills, commanding completely the harbour and town, are being entrenched with parks of artillery; a railway to join the line from Batoum to Poti and Tiflis is nearly finished; and large quantities of military stores are collected at a depôt a few miles up the coast.

The town itself is situated on a dry shingly beach. Between it and the hills is a dull, dreary swamp; and the flat inside the cordon, which is marked by a track circling the foot of the hills, contains about a thousand acres. Everything is allowed free into the town; but what a difference on going out! The minutest inspection of baggage is insisted upon at the port, or in passing the cordon, and very heavy dues are charged. The fact is Batoum is nothing more than a large "bonded store," and the practical usefulness of its

"free port" is of no account. When the natives first heard of the free port they flocked into the town, found articles cheap, but were charged such taxes on reaching the cordon as made the prices higher than before. They did not modify their anathemas on the Russians! Ships should always be allowed free into the port, but there appears to be no advantage to any one (except the Russian Government) in the present regulations. Granted that articles are cheaper to people residing in Batoum, who would or will live there? It is difficult to drain, excessively dirty, and noted as one of the worst spots for fever in all these regions celebrated for that pestilence. With the hills so close a better site for the town will surely be found, and then it will be outside the free port!

Batoum is a rainy place, and the country in the vicinity very fertile. The climate is healthy in the hills, but cannot be worse in the town itself. The first thing we met in the streets was a funeral, and the hospitals are full to overflowing. This is not surprising after seeing the Russian soldiers in the town, mere boys, badly clad and worse fed. A citizen in the military employ of the Tsar only gets coarse brown bread at eleven in the morning, and greasy vegetable broth, with brown bread again, for his dinner. The most ordinary precautions are not taken to prevent him

from catching fever; he is allowed to sleep (often outside his tent) on the damp ground, and he starts for parade in the morning without any food or stimulant. It is no wonder that the mortality here amongst the soldiers has been frightful.

There are some quaint old Turkish houses, mostly deserted and ruinous, in the town, and a picturesque octagon-shaped mosque with an uncommonly good minaret in the open square behind the fort. This mosque was built by the Sultana Valideh, the mother of the Sultan Abdul Mejid, called by the Turks "The Great Sultan." The Russians have a curious law that the municipality of any place may take your land for any improvement, streets, etc., provided you have not erected buildings upon it. When Batoum became Russian the bazaars which came down to the sea-shore in the centre of the fort were objected to; but the difficulty was how to get rid of them with this law in existence. A fire occurred—not accidentally it is said—and no attempt was made to put it out until two-thirds of the bazaars were demolished! The blackened ruins only are to be seen, and a new street is being made, the Government having claimed the ground!

The country of Lazistan, or Lazica, was peopled by a race of Mussulmans; it extended

originally from the south of Trebizond considerably to the north of Poti, joining there the district of Apcasia. The Lazes will have to remain as Russian subjects or migrate to Turkish dominions—perhaps out of the frying-pan into the fire, as I heard of cases where the Turks were trying to raise the State taxes (their system of collecting rents, as all are tenants under the Crown) five years in advance. But still, with the prospect of ill-usage there, the natives are only waiting to harvest and dispose of their crops of maize to depart to Turkey. If Russia had given the natives ten years, with exemption from military service, to remain, or meanwhile to part with their holdings, and at the end of that time, if stopping, to become Russian subjects, they would, with this option, have probably all continued in the country; but, alas! a different course of action has been followed. The three years given by the Treaty of Berlin for the Turks either to remove from the territory acquired by Russia or to become subjects of the Tsar expire in February next. The authorities have checkmated the wretched people, and they are in an awkward position for themselves. They loathe the idea of becoming Russian subjects, liable for enlistment in the army, and will certainly leave the country; but every difficulty

is placed in their way of disposing of their farms and property. Strangers are not allowed to buy land from them, and although some people have purchased houses in Batoum, even Russian subjects are now prevented from buying land in the vicinity outside the cordon. Count S., whose farm I visited, has purchased two or three places, but the Government refuse to ratify the bargains, and he will not be able to retain the property. It really seems as if the Russians desire to force the people to go without getting payment for their land, or to remain as their subjects and tenants under the Government, which it is impossible to think they will do. The case of the Apcasians is very hard. Some sixteen or seventeen years ago a number of them, after a revolt in their country to the northward of Poti, left Russian territory and migrated to Turkish. They were given land in the valleys near Batoum, on the condition that if they farmed the places allotted (subject to certain dues) they would become their absolute property at the end of twenty years. The Russians will not recognise this agreement, and tell these settlers to shift again, or if they remain, they must pay rent at valuation for their holdings. The Apcasians and Lazes had deputed one man at each of their settlements to negotiate with a purchaser,

and dispose of their places in one lot, if possible; buyers would have been found in abundance. but the transactions are stopped by the refusal of the Russian powers to recognise the sales. This seems to be straining with unusual severity the fortune of war against these poor people. Why has a different plan been adopted here to that pursued in the Crimea in the last century? Was Catherine the Great a more lenient monarch than the present Tsar? Is Russia less of a civilising power now than she was a hundred years ago?

It is openly said that these districts will be parcelled off and allotted to various officials by the Government; but where will the labourers, the tillers of the soil, be? Already forty thousand Lazes and Apcasians have left this part of the country, and thousands are now preparing to go. Who will replace them? The Russian is a ridiculous colonist, and if ever so good a one, he will not come here. He has plenty of land and occupation at home. There is, however, an exception. A sect of dissenters from the orthodox church are called the Molokans. They object to the display of pictures and "tawdry" in the churches, and decline to use the liturgy. In fact, they resemble the Presbyterians. They hold peculiar views on marriage vows, and practise divorce from the matrimonial state, which, how-

ever, rarely occurs. They are scrupulously clean and sober in their habits, and are very religious and quiet people. Banished from Russia proper, the Government gave them places in various parts near the Caspian Sea to settle at, whence a small colony migrated lately to a swamp just outside the town of Batoum. Their wooden huts, raised about three feet from the ground on piles, are placed in a most unhealthy situation, but everything about them looks neat and tidy. They are employed mostly as labourers, no land having been given to them yet. If you meet one he is instantly recognised from his superior appearance to the ordinary Russ. The Molokans were turned out of Russia in the reign of Alexander I., and may now return if they like; they make good settlers, and it is a pity they are not more numerous. How lamentable the policy of Russia is! She forces away the labouring population without the prospect of replacing it. Instead of conciliating and retaining the races under her government, she widens the differences between them and embitters the hatred of the Mussulmans. The blight of a military despotism follows her, and falls on the luckless land she governs!

The friend I expected to meet in Batoum had been unfortunately called away, but he left an excellent substitute in Mr. K., who was most

energetic in showing a brother Englishman everything he could. The only carriage to be found was a clumsy "tarantass," very like an Irish car, but longer, and placed on four small wheels. In appearance a double sofa; its only good quality the difficulty of upsetting it. This machine, the property of the General (who was out on a holiday), Mr. K. borrowed from the aide-de-camp. We started, a party of four, following the so-called road (an earthen track abounding in mud-pockets, in which we repeatedly stuck), which forms the boundary of the free port of Batoum. A mile from the town are some newly-built barracks, empty and useless, the ground-floors being under water. The soldiers had been removed from them, and are now under canvas and twig huts in the port at Batoum. It seems impossible to understand why such deliberate waste in building dwelling-places in such a position should have been permitted. Crossing a small river, which is the eastern boundary of the flat, the foot of the hills is reached. Large barracks and artillery stores have been built here, and more are in the course of erection; a branch railway from the main line to Tiflis runs through the cantonments, bisecting them and the artillery sheds. We walked up a side valley about a mile, to call on an Apcasian farmer known to

Mr. K., the path leading us through thickets of tropical shrubs, rhododendrons, and azaleas, trees entwined with clematis and other creepers, patches of maize of great height here and there, showing the fertility of the soil, and not a habitation within sight till, after ascending a steep "brae-side," we suddenly came upon the hut, the farmer and his servant standing in the verandah ready to receive us. They had seen us coming, though concealed from our view. After shaking hands all round, we were invited to seat ourselves on a couch in the verandah, and then could see what a good look-out the place had, though apparently completely screened by foliage. Snug little huts appeared peeping out among fields of maize on the opposite hillside, the owners calling to one another announcing our arrival, and soon several men came up to see "the English." The farmer, a tall, well-built man of middle age, sent his servant to fetch water from a spring close by, and presented each of us with a cucumber. He entered into a lively conversation, which, however, on being interpreted, was largely an interchange of compliments. The two ladies of our party were invited inside the house to see his wife, and after formal salaams, we were conducted by another more direct path to the foot of the hill where the

Apcasian bade us good-bye, expressing himself highly honoured by our call. None of the natives we saw here were armed, but all those met with away from their homes were indeed fully provided with weapons for any emergency; a Lazi regularly carries two daggers in his girdle, often a revolver hung in a sheath by his right side, and always a rifle slung across his shoulders, his hand grasping the butt as if ready for immediate action. Their independent gait accords well with the reputation these tribes have for fearlessness and independence, perhaps in many instances for lawlessness, but Mr. K. declares that no prospect of plunder would induce them knowingly to attack an Englishman. Rejoining our "tarantass" we drove by the roughest of bullock roads up another valley called "Gordak," as far as we could get, nearly two miles, and then walked another mile to a farm lately bought by Count S., and lunched with appetite, the air being oppressively "muggy" and tiring. This farm keeps numbers of bees. We inspected the hives, which are made out of a block of wood three to four feet long and eighteen inches in diameter; a log of this size is cut from a tree and sawn in half, then both sides are scooped out leaving one base, the two halves are joined together, a board with a few holes for the bees is nailed to the front, and the hive is complete.

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A LAZI'S HUT, GORDAK, NEAR BATOUM. [p. 114

On the second morning of our visit to Batoum we had arranged another drive into the country with Mr. K. He arrived at the time appointed with a message from the "chef de police" that he could be in no way responsible for our safety, and that it was very dangerous to make expeditions into the interior. After a good laugh at this, I went to call on the Governor. He received me most courteously, and talked about the future of Batoum, and what improvements were to be made. I ventured to express an earnest hope that the Russians would carry out their designs, so as to develop so fine a country which was blessed with such a harbour. I may here remark that our visit had caused great excitement amongst the authorities at Batoum; Mr. K. had been inundated with questions as to our reasons for coming, what we intended to do, etc.? I did my best to calm the Governor's susceptibility; every Russian official on the frontiers seems to think you have some object inimical to his country when an Englishman visits it. Undismayed by the policeman's warnings, and preferring to be guided by Mr. K.'s judgment, we started at twelve in our "tarantass" as before, but with another pair of ponies and a worse coachman, who seemed to delight in tormenting and ill-treating the beasts he drove, while he jolted us over every rough

place we came to, until violent expostulation made him more merciful to them and to us. Passing through the town, we traversed the road to the north-east, skirting the bay, alongside of the railway, which is being made to join the Poti and Tiflis line. The beautifully wooded hills are close to the shore, and seem to form an impenetrable jungle, but here and there the glimpse of the eave of a Lazi's hut is caught amidst a mass of green. On our right we passed a prominent hillock with some ruins on the top, said to be one of the many burying-places of the Georgian Queen Thamar, and now surmounted by a rude structure for containing dynamite; nearly opposite to it is an old earthwork fortification of the Turks; after driving about four miles we reached the foot of a narrow valley, where we descended, and walked through a field of magnificent maize to a spring noted, said our cicerone, for its coolness. We found two natives reclining by its side under the shade of the alder trees around, but they shifted to give us room, and we were soon enjoying our luncheon in this delightfully shady spot, for the sun had been most oppressive. We were seated barely a quarter of an hour when four Lazes, fully armed and accoutred, arrived. The leading one advanced quickly and placed a large handkerchief full of pears on the ground between

Mr. K. and myself. Then they all seated themselves behind us. Mr. K. did not at first recognise the donor, but, on looking round again, saluted the man, who was delighted to see him. The Lazi was a small farmer some distance up the valley, and it was most curious how he could have learned that we were there.

Although we passed several natives on the road, we had not stopped on the way, and no one knew of our intended visit. Our companion Mr. K. declared that the natives knew the movements of every one, and again expressed his belief in the safety of any Englishman, if known to be such, in these districts. We ate some of the pears, and gave some bread and the remnants of our luncheon to our neighbours, who wrapped them carefully away. They took immense interest in the packing of our "Barrett's" lunch basket, uttering exclamations of wonder from time to time. I was then introduced as an Englishman, at which they nodded and smiled. We examined their arms; one had a loaded gun, the barrel illuminated with "London" in gilt capital letters; and another had the Turkish Crimean medal, which, he explained, was given to him for services rendered in the commissariat department; he had not been in the regular army, but was at Sevastopol. At the mention of this word there

was a twinkle in every eye, as if each would have liked to play a part in another such sad drama. We took leave of our friends after the exchange of grave and courtly salutations, it being evident our visit had given them pleasure, and returning to Batoum, called on Admiral and Mrs. G., who threw a damper on our hopes of leaving for Poti the next morning, prophesying wind and storm, the least amount of which prevents even flat-bottomed steamers from crossing the bar at Poti. The admiral is in command of the seaport of Batoum, and evidently, with his geniality and good sense, is the right man in the right place. He showed us over the general's gardens (that functionary being absent on leave). All sorts of our hothouse plants were growing in profusion, and while extolling the botanical beauties, the admiral heartily abused Batoum, its bad houses, and bad sanitary arrangements. But there are treasures in the little town. Two Frenchmen (brothers) keep the small Hôtel de France, where we stopped. Unpretending, but clean, everything is nicely done throughout the house, and what a pleasure it is to eat a French dish after the greasy Russian messes! Long may Messrs. C. maintain their establishment and excellent *cuisine!* This is the wish of all residents in, and visitors to Batoum.

Having gone on board the steamer at 8.30 p.m., supposed to start at midnight, we found the ship full of people; porters bringing baggage on board, men singing, children screaming, and the rain pattering down, made sleep impossible.

We did not start from Batoum until 6 a.m., and arrived off Poti about 9 a.m., the majority of the passengers on board wet through, and the decks of the miserable steamer, the *Rion*, crowded with wretched mortals, Turks, Georgians, Armenians, Greeks, and Russians, in the same plight. Thanks to the generous courtesy of a gentleman (who expressed a confident opinion that if he had been in England we should have done the same thing for him), we had the only cabin on board, which he had secured. Poti is at the mouth of the River Rion, and barely four feet of water covers the bar; the least roughness of the sea prevents vessels from crossing. The weather was calm, but there was a considerable "swell" on, so we had to wait outside for a smaller steamer. She came at last, sticking for a minute or two on the bar, but soon got off, and the swell being too great for the steamers to transfer their cargo and passengers in the open roadstead, both had to steam about a mile northwards to the new harbour of Poti. The vexation of the delay was compensated by the sight of this

work, on which several hundred thousand pounds have already been thrown away. The design is simply two large semicircular breakwaters starting a quarter of a mile apart, at right angles from the straight shore, nearly three-quarters of a mile in length, and leaving an entrance about 200 yards wide. The breakwaters are formed of large concrete blocks, the foundations being wooden piles. The sides are bulged and appear to be in a dangerous condition. A Russian gentleman naïvely remarked to me that bad wood had been used at first! I think no one but a Russian engineer or contractor would have dreamt of using wood at all. Another person observed that some one had made plenty of money out of Poti harbour, and I could agree with him! Now the engineers are trying to break the force of the sea by tipping blocks of concrete over the sides of the breakwaters, both ends of which are washed away. If they succeed in securing the sea walls, the harbour will have to be dredged out, at present there being only ten or twelve feet of water at the entrance, and the way the harbour is set, right in the channel, almost designed to catch the silt from the River Rion, will make it most difficult to keep open. However, the place answered our purpose, for we were able, in calm water, to pack ourselves and baggage like sandwiches on the smaller

steamer, which took us safely over the bar, after several hitches and sticks, into the river.

After seeing Poti and the impossibilities of the port, one cannot wonder at the desire of the Russians to obtain Batoum. Poti is situated about a mile up the river, a far-stretching alluvial swamp surrounding it; most people give the place a bad name for fever, but, luckily, there are some who defend its reputation. Our consul, Mr. Gardner, to whose kind attention we were much indebted, will not hear it depreciated, but scouts the charge of unhealthiness, believes the harbour will yet be made a good one, nor dreads the rivalry of Batoum. That the mouth of the Rion was at one time easy of access is undoubted; some think the retrogression of the waters of the Black Sea has altered the harbour, and certainly their level has fallen considerably in the course of many centuries. These changes may be due to comparatively recent volcanic disturbances in the Crimean peninsula, which is supposed by geologists to have been raised by igneous action; possibly to those earthquakes, which occurred in the neighbourhood of the Euxine four hundred years ago, simultaneously with the eruptions at Alupka and elsewhere, and destroyed Yalta and other towns in the district.

For it must have been different when Jason and his companions in the Argo entered the river, the celebrated Phasis of those ages, in search of the Golden Fleece. Many Persian monarchs, notably Chosroes, formed fleets of ships on the Phasis wherewith to harry the trade of the Euxine; in the second century Arrian relates that the mouth was strongly fortified "for the protection of all who sailed on the river;" as late as the sixteenth century the Turks appear to have found the harbour easy of access, and largely used it. Notwithstanding the present drawbacks the trade of Poti is considerable, the railway connecting it with Kutais and Tiflis having done much to develop it, while the river floats down the products of the Caucasian forests, principally box, walnut, and holly, which trees flourish on the western slopes, and are largely exported to Marseilles and other ports for upholstery work.

About seven hours' steam to the northward of Poti is the town and harbour of Soukhum-Kaleh, the chief place in the country of Abhase (more often called Apcasia). The tribes residing in the vicinity have given the Russians much trouble, retreating to their mountain fastnesses whenever attacked, and maintaining, until lately, a constant warfare. They are a wild and treacherous race,

ready to take any one's life for the plunder of a few roubles. The country is rich with luxuriant vegetation, its exports of box and walnut wood being very considerable. Soukhum is the site of the ancient city of Dioscurias, named after the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux, by Amphitus and Telchius, their charioteers, who are supposed to have founded it. It is said that Dioscurias was the common market for the nations living in the eastern countries beyond the Euxine, and that seventy nations, all speaking different languages from living dispersed without intercourse, assembled here for the purpose of buying salt imported from Southern Russia. Here, too, in later ages, the Genoese did a thriving but cruel trade, bartering salt for Circassian slaves to be delivered in the Turkish and Egyptian markets. In the recent war between Turkey and Russia the Turks sent an expedition against Soukhum-Kaleh, and took it; their object being to raise the tribes in the rear of the Russian forces. They spread reports that sons of Schamyl (the great Circassian leader) were with them, and though they effected a landing, giving their antagonists much trouble, the undertaking, if well planned, seems to have been badly carried out, and failed. The sensation it caused, and the seeming readiness on the part of the tribes to rise all over the Caucasus, appear

(from their manner of referring to the subject) to have made a deep impression on the Russian authorities.

Some splendid timber trees of beech, Spanish chestnut, and walnut filled this valley, and each farm was surrounded by fruit (apple, pear, peach, quince, and fig) trees, showing the capabilities of the soil. Another jolting ride on the "tarantass" brought us back to Batoum by sundown.

GEORGIA.

Evil reports of the train accommodation on the Poti line had reached us, and we were agreeably surprised to find the carriages very comfortable. Perhaps it was the fact of not having seen a railway for three months that made us appreciate that mode of conveyance. We left Poti at 2.30 p.m. The dense masses of underwood around preclude any view of the town or environs, and the mists on the hills prevented our seeing Mount Elbruz and the Caucasus range. The line passes through a flat country, which it has done much to drain, covered with "jungle" of all descriptions and dotted with larger trees, mostly decayed and "stag-headed," showing that timber perishes when the roots get down to the water. Ascending gradually the plain through which the Rion flows, the cultivated fields increase, and fine crops of maize were standing almost ready for the sickle, for this is the tool

used in reaping it. The kingdom of Georgia was divided into four Principalities, which at one time had separate rulers and princes of their own. The districts first passed are Gouria and Mingrelia, the richest provinces in fertility. At each station we stopped at, children brought quantities of fruit, figs, pears, peaches, and grapes, for sale to the passengers at a most moderate price, a large basketful only costing five copecks, equal to about threepence. After crossing the Rion, here a rapid, sparkling stream, we reached at 6 p.m. the junction for Kutais, having accomplished sixty miles in three and a half hours, a very slow journey according to English ideas, owing to the delays at each station.

We now entered the province of Imeritia, the capital of which is Kutais, the ancient Cyta, and the principal city of the land of Colchis of the Greeks; here Jason came in the Argo to obtain the Golden Fleece, and it is now the headquarters of a lieutenancy under the principal Government of the Caucasus. It was getting dusk as we reached the hills—the spur running south from the Caucasus Mountains—which extend almost east and west from the Euxine to the Caspian Sea, and as recent soundings have proved extend in the same latitude underneath

it. These Imeritian hills, about sixty miles in breadth, appear like a connecting link between the Caucasus and Armenian Mountain chains, which are parallel, though three hundred miles distant from each other. Passing the station Koyryla, eighty miles from Poti, the line slowly ascends by the side of a tributary of the Rion River, through a beautiful and delightful country; there is a charm in passing mountainous districts and rippling streams by moonlight, the weird-like forms and colour of the trees and rocks, the glassy reflection of the water, give a peculiarly impressive effect—interesting, inspiriting, and soothing. We were told the pass over which the railway crawls should be seen by daylight, but I doubt its attractiveness being greater than on the night of the 3rd of September. The further eastwards one travels it seems as if moonlight is more appreciated; the contrast from the heat of the day, the freshness of the air, the brilliancy of its silvery rays when the moon is up, render this time for journeying the favoured one with all in Eastern lands.

At the foot of the great incline, which at places is 1 in 22, one of Fairlie's patent engines was attached to the train in front and another engine assisted behind. With much puffing and grunting, we reached the top of the Souram

Pass about 1 a.m., and soon afterwards ran down the incline on the other side to the Souram station. Mr. M., a brother Scotchman and friend in need indeed, who met us here, had kindly provided accommodation at his house close by, and we "turned in" at 3 a.m., congratulating ourselves on the good fortune of procuring such quarters.

Souram is a large village of four thousand inhabitants, situated in a ravine of the hills, just above the valley of the River Kúra. Being a healthy place, large numbers of Russian troops are quartered there, and Mr. M., who has been engineer on the railway since its commencement in 1867, and now has charge of the important part comprising the hill section, lives at Souram in the summer months, and at Michaeloff, a few miles down the Kúra valley, during the winter. There is a considerable Jewish and Armenian population at Souram, both sects keeping to distinct quarters in the town, which is also noticeable for having a curious ruined castle, nearly circular in shape, built on a stratified rock, which rises oddly in the midst of the valley. Vakhtang, King of Georgia, is said to have built it, and there is a wonderful legend that a portion of the walls repeatedly fell down, until the wise witches of the district were summoned

to advise on the matter. They recommended that a boy should be buried alive in the wall when it was rebuilt, in order to propitiate the favour of the saint. This was done, and the wall stood, while now a spring oozing from the wall-side is shown as the spot where the lad's body was interred, and this is the cause of the water!

Mr. M.'s long residence and connection in the country enabled him to interest us with many anecdotes, but with none more than the following: The construction of the line from Poti to Tiflis was undertaken by English contractors, and several of the men employed by them have remained in the district. They are not known to the natives by their surnames, but called Mr. Tom, Mr. Jack, and Mr. Bill. The latter is a mighty hunter, and noted for procuring game where no one else can get it. But Mr. Jack (who will, I am sure, excuse the familiarity of my using his best-known name) has lately become the hero of the vale. A Georgian was down an old well when it suddenly fell in, burying the poor man at a depth of nearly forty feet. The natives assembled, and of course concluded he was killed. A cross was made, and the priest arrived to read the burial service (which would have settled all matters, prevented police inter-

ference, and avoided the nuisance of *post mortem* examinations, very comfortably), when Mr. Jack arrived on the scene. His work had been largely connected with tunnelling, for which he undertook sub-contracts from the railway company, and he thoroughly understood the situation at a glance. He had brought an iron crow-bar with him, and driving it into the ground above the well, applied his ear to the end, by which rude telephone he heard the cries of the imprisoned man below. The exclamation, "He's alive!" called forth an ejaculation from the priest that Mr. Jack was mad, and the bystanders agreed with him, when the Englishman next announced his intention of "digging the fellow out." Summoning two lads, who worked for him, he commenced his self-imposed task, filling buckets with the *débris* of the fallen well, which were hauled up by ropes to the surface by his two fellow workmen. For twenty-four hours without intermission he toiled on (having early in his work become fully assured that the wretched man lived), and by the end of that time managed to clear away the stones and earth from around him. Coming to the surface he then informed the people who had crowded up to watch his work that the man was "all right," and that they might now bring him up, as he had had "quite enough

of him!" With much misgiving some men were lowered by ropes and brought the man up. He was badly hurt, but has recovered from his injuries, and now offers to work for Mr. Jack for the rest of his life for nothing; but *he* pithily observes, when mentioning the offer to others, that "a man's labour, which is not worth more than twenty copecks a day, is very little use to him!" The Russian authorities proposed to give him some medals, but Mr. Jack sent them a message that he only wanted new buckets and ropes which he had damaged in the work. I heard that it had been determined to give him something in recognition of his gallantry; and, little as he himself values the merit of his achievement, there is peculiar pleasure in hearing an Englishman's name associated with so praiseworthy and extraordinary a feat as Mr. Jack's, in having, at the imminent risk of his own life, rescued a fellow-creature from death.

Nearly every country has within it a sect of Jews which its authorities designate as the lost tribe; but here in Georgia it is fully believed that the Jewish settlements (which are only three or four in number) represent them correctly. In a grave close to M'tzkett was found recently a slab with an inscription, which commemorated the burial of the body ninety-one years after the

Assyrian captivity; and the geography of the country due north from Palestine, at the foot of the Caucasus Mountains, and the exclusiveness, traditions, and manners of the race, lead one to believe that here the tribe wandered and remained for ages unknown.

Leaving Souram at 3.30 p.m., we drove by the military road up the valley of the Kúra about thirty-five miles to Borjom; following the course of the river westwards through the Imeritian chain of hills, which are well wooded, affording beautiful scenery at every turn.

The credit of fixing upon Borjom as a hill sanatorium must be given to the late Prince Woronsoff, who was for some time governor of the Caucasus; as regards climate and attractiveness the place has hardly an equal. The Grand Duke Michael built a charming château here, made roads up the side valleys, and laid out gardens. He entertained the late Emperor, who, in a moment of enthusiasm, made a present of the estates to his brother. The properties had been bought by Woronsoff from different Georgian nobles, and belonged to the State; they comprise thirty miles square of land, growing magnificent timber; and the Emperor's present was one indeed, which the Grand Duke could thank him for. A Kur-haus, with baths, "salons," and reading-rooms, like a German watering-place,

affords every convenience to visitors and patients who come to imbibe the mineral waters; military bands play morning and evening, prettily situated villas are dotted here and there, rendering Borjom a nice place in every way. There are lovely walks and drives in the neighbourhood, plenty of ruined castles of fabled age to be seen, and good fishing to be had in the Kúra and the numerous mountain streams that flow into it. The River Kúra, the ancient Cyruus or Cyrus, rises many hundred miles distant among the Armenian hills. Flowing in a northerly direction till reaching the Imeritian chain, it cuts through the range in an easterly direction, and, on reaching the great Georgian Valley, at Michaeloff, continues its course due east by Tiflis to the Caspian Sea. It is a very rapid, turbulent stream, confined within narrow limits among the hills, and here very like the upper reaches of the Spey and the Dee. But its waters are of a muddy brown description, caused by the sandy steppes of Armenia and the irrigation of the low-lying lands there. Most excellent trout of large size are to be obtained. Nets of all descriptions are used by the Georgians, and in many places cruives are set across the river. This pursuit, and the floating of rafts of timber, are their principal means of livelihood in the Borjom district.

Travelling in the Caucasus is certainly in-

convenient, the only means of conveyance being the carriages to be hired at the post stations and the horses, for which one buys a "padarojnaya" (order for horses) beforehand for the journey, but without the certainty of performing it. The yemstchyck (driver) receives a gratuity of twenty copecks (sixpence) each stage, but generally the traveller gives him more, although it does little to enlist his services in procuring expedition. The delays at the Dookanas (post stations) are most tedious, never less than half-an-hour being wasted, and frequently travellers are made to wait two or three hours, more in the interest of the station master, from whom provisions can be obtained, than anything else. Officers obtain stamped official orders and take precedence of other travellers, who are at the mercy of the storoj (station agent), generally a drunken, careless fellow, unfitted for the position he is placed in, and civil only to officers. These gentlemen usually travel in a light four-wheeled open cart, the body like the half of a barrel with a seat across it, filled with hay, and springless; the most uncomfortable of machines, called a "pereclodnaya."

Desirous of seeing the military road to the southern frontier, and having obtained a "padarojnaya," we started at nine in the morning from

Borjom to visit Akhaltsikh. The horses on the post roads are only ponies of twelve to fourteen hands in height, but swift of foot, and when fresh they get over the ground at a rattling pace. Our first team of four took us the next stage, about eleven miles, in an hour. The road winds with the River Kúra the whole way, disclosing views of pine-covered glens, and peeps of charming scenery. Ruined castles crown the crags at intervals, remnants of the princedom and feudalism of Georgia, so that it almost appears as if every rocky valley had its lord and his castle in ancient times. The spots selected for these strongholds were always the most precipitous and inaccessible cliffs, generally separated by a chasm from the spur of the mountain and commanding the pass on both sides. No account seems to have been taken of the water supply which must have been carried up to them, showing they were probably used more as retreats upon a sudden emergency than as residences. Another curiosity in connection with the castles of the petty princes of Georgia is that in almost every instance, a chapel was built alongside and within the fortifications, till it became a saying that the title to be a prince in the country was a castle, a church, and a few barren rocks, which the owner never visited, and perhaps had never seen! The Russians acquiesced

in the Georgian nobles keeping their titles when the countries were united, and they are proud and jealous of them; but so numerous are they that many have descended with impoverished incomes into far lower grades of society, while they still insist on their ancient rank and designation. It is said that many of the waiters in the hotels at Tiflis are princes of Georgia! Having started with three horses on the second stage (the yemstchyck assuring us the road was so good that only three were necessary), we bowled merrily along and reached Azkhur at eleven o'clock, having come nearly twenty miles. But this expedition was not to last. The postmaster took the order I handed him and gave some orders to the men in charge of the horses in a careless sort of way. They brought out one horse, then another, while a quarter of an hour was consumed, and I thought every one would soon go to sleep, when a Cossack galloped up, wheeled his horse round, backed him into a position before the post-house, and uttered words which revolutionised the scene. Post-master, stable-men, horses, natives smoking in the verandahs of their houses, appeared different beings as a carriage with two gentlemen (who I learnt afterwards were the acting Governor of Tiflis and his aide-de-camp) drove up. Each vied with the other in showing respect to the party,

the chief men of the village arrived, and stood around with meek humility depicted on their countenances and demeanour. Here was smartness indeed! The horses intended for us were seized and harnessed to the Governor's carriage, in a twinkling it was ready, and away he went like a dream, amid the salaams of the populace. My companion, who had gone to sketch, here returned, thinking it was time we were away, but soon found there was ample leisure to finish her drawing. After waiting another ten minutes, while all relapsed as if by magic into their former torpid state, I appealed to a man shoeing a horse. Before he could hear my request, out came the only answer given in Russia, "sey-tchass," which means "directly." To everything, in every place, the labourer, the tradesman, the waiter, the groom, the coachman, the postmaster reply, "sey-tchass," and invariably your wants are the last thing present in their minds; one soon learns to interpret the word by its opposite meaning, or to be exasperated at its meaningless iteration. I boiled over on this occasion, roused the postmaster out of his house (where he had retired to smoke), and threatened every sort of vengeance. He must have known what I said mattered little; but he bestirred the men and himself, even to assisting in harnessing four jaded steeds, so that

I soothed his ruffled feelings with a present, and we started at last. Our horses making a bolt for the Borjom Road (a bad omen!), were turned with many guttural execrations from the driver, and at a very moderate pace we left Azkhur.

The Imeritian forests end here, and the country opens out into a wide undulating steppe, without vegetation (except in the hollows and valleys, and where irrigation can be schemed), arid, bare, and brown, like the districts of Armenia and Central Asia. It is worth going once to see these scorched plains and rocks, to wonder how industry can produce crops upon them, but a second visit is rarely desired. The ancient castle of Azkhur commands the river at a point where there is an old wooden bridge; the building is very extensive and beautifully situated, the town lying behind it to the south-west, with the ruins of a fine old church, the walls and gables of the nave alone standing, evidences of Turkish acts of demolition in the campaigns of 1828 and 1829, which the Russians have done nothing to repair. Azkhur was the frontier town of Georgia, and the boundary of Turkish Armenia prior to 1828. The peace of Adrianople, that succeeded in the following year, gave Russia the stretch of country from here to the watershed of the Armenian Mountains, some sixty or seventy

miles further south. The peace of 1856 did not change the frontier much beyond slightly rectifying it in certain places, but the last war has bestowed on the northern Power a great acquisition of territory, including the whole of Lazistan, lying south-west from Akhaltsikh. The frontier runs from the River Tchoruk eastwards, giving Kars and Ardahan, and the command of all the caravan and hill roads into Armenia and Asia Minor to Russia. Our way now left the main stream of the Kúra, which lay more to the south, and followed one of its tributaries westwards, passing a Turkish village (which it was easy at once to recognise from the evidences of irrigation, the melon gardens, and orchards), rising by easy gradients to the plateau, where the hills above Kars and the Armenian chain came into view. The day was excessively hot, our driver was sulky, and the horses done up, not a green thing was visible over the arid hills, which seemed baked until they reflected back the heat; Armenian and Turkish burying-grounds easily distinguishable, the former with large oblong stones and sarcophagi, the latter having narrow upright stones, with a fez or turban carved on the top, and a large iron pedestal and cross, erected to a Russian general who was killed in 1828 in

a battle here, were the only things to break the monotony of the twenty miles of road we passed before reaching Akhaltsikh.

Akhaltsikh was the frontier garrison town of the southern Caucasus before the last war, and contains extensive barracks situated on the south bank of the river, where also are the Armenian quarters and shops. The Turkish population live on the north side, and employ themselves in a considerable industry in gold and silver filagree ornaments, delicately and carefully made; specimens of the work, which some ascribe to Grecian, others to Phœnician origin, are to be found in many settlements upon the eastern shores of the Euxine, but Akhaltsikh is the principal seat of the trade. The castle on the western side is of very ancient date, placed, as usual, on an almost precipitous rock overhanging the river. It was repaired by the Russians, and barracks built within its walls, but they now are used as hospitals. Crossing the river by a wooden bridge, and driving through the town to the post station, which we reached about 3 p.m., our arrival brought out a Russian officer, and a dapper-like clerk, to whom I handed my "padorojnaya." He informed me that there were no horses to be had, and being too hungry to argue the point, I simply insisted upon having

them in two hours' time, then retired into one of the station rooms, and we fell to at luncheon, the officer relapsing into slumber upon a neighbouring couch from which we had disturbed him. Having satisfied the cravings of nature, I proceeded first to the stables, and found them full of horses, but no person with them. Returning to the station, the clerk met me with my order in his hand, and gravely informed me that we could have horses to return at 9 p.m. The prospect of a five hours' drive in the middle of the night was no joke, so argument with expostulation began, and wrath ended, a stormy scene! I had almost reconciled myself to the fate of stopping the night in Akhaltsikh, when a gentleman from the balcony of the post-house inquired in French whether he could assist me? Having thanked him and explained the situation, he went with me to the clerk, and looked over the pile of orders for horses which generals, colonels, *cum multis aliis*, had lodged at the office days ago engaging horses, the practice appearing to be to secure means of conveyance long before they are required (equally detrimental to the postal revenues as to the convenience of other travellers). The answer to my statement that the stables were full of horses was that at any moment those who had

sent in their orders might arrive. So I inquired if horses could be engaged in the town, but this was a "prasne." All the shops were shut, and it was a general holiday. The clerk, however, offered to send a man to try and hire horses for us, and, after much "haggling" as to price, two were produced, a chestnut and a gray, the former three hands higher than the latter, both of the roughest description, and they were harnessed to the carriage by innumerable pieces of rope. These operations had consumed considerable time, and meanwhile we were able to take a walk through the town, but there was nothing to see. Russian barracks have no architectural pretensions, and Akhaltsikh contains nothing but these and the official residences, with the Armenian shops and quarters. The old town, also bare of trees and gardens, a succession of mud-roofed, one-storied cabins, is picturesquely situated on the north side, and the castle claimed attention from the amateur draughtsman, but we were heartily glad to turn our backs on the place at five o'clock. The driver, bribed for speed, was not sparing of whipcord, and we got over the ground at a good pace, reaching Azkhur at dusk. It was lucky my present in the morning had soothed the heart of the postmaster here, and, after much altercation with his men, he gave us

two horses. Just as we started, up came a "pereclodnaya" with the officer we had left slumbering in the station at Akhaltsikh. He seemed surprised and disappointed to see us; perhaps he wanted to take our horses, as he quickly produced his official order! But I instantly directed the Jehu to start, and we reached Borjom late at night, not over-pleased with the arrangements for travellers on Russian roads.

About twenty miles from Borjom, in a side valley to the south-east, are the ancient church and convent of Timoty-Ubany (Timothy's house). After driving fourteen miles, we reached a post station, and turned off the road through a narrow gorge in the hills by a track which rain on the previous day had rendered almost impassable, added to which one of the horses was a "jibber," and we had to take to our feet on arriving at any rising ground. The entrance of the gorge, some forty yards in width, allowing scarcely room for the cart track and the stream flowing by, had originally been defended by a castle and walls on either side. Perched on the edges of the precipitous cliffs, the foundations (which to the eye would seem to have been most precarious) alone remained. Beyond the gorge a narrow cultivated valley led to the village of Takwarry, where a score of barking, vicious-

looking shepherd dogs greeted our arrival in no friendly fashion. In the face of a rocky mountain overlooking the village are some good specimens of the cave dwelling-places or refuges which the Georgians made in these inaccessible spots.

At any place where the strata of the rock permitted, the front of the hollow or cave was built up, leaving a small door and a window, the only modes of ingress and egress being in some instances by rude steps cut in the face of the cliff, assisted by a ladder, which was drawn into the house after reaching it, or by ropes from above. It must be remembered that for generations the Georgians not only lived at strife among themselves, but dwelt in constant terror of their neighbours, the Mongols, the Persians, and the Turks, from all of whom, in successive ages, they frequently suffered. Each village had its own set of hiding-places or retreats, and although comical in appearance, as if plastered on to the rock, they no doubt served their purpose at the time very effectually. In the parts of Georgia where the stone is softer and permits of it, the dwellings are hewn out, but always perched in inaccessible and easily defensible positions. Two miles beyond the village we reached Timoty-Ubany. The only remains of the convent are a fine, old, arched

doorway, the foundations of the courtyard, and a small building, like a mortuary chapel, as the burial ground was close by. The church, which stands in the centre of the enclosure, is of the usual style of Byzantine architecture — a lofty nave, with side aisles, the tower (angled in shape), and dome rising in the centre of the building— but is peculiar in structure, being built of small red bricks, with a stone roof, and has a very good porch, with broad, well-rounded arches, approaching the Norman style. Part of the roof of the nave has fallen, and is now covered with wood. The top of the dome and its cross are gone, and the walls are cracked in many places. The tower is octagonal, and on each face is a cross of large light-blue enamel tiles, while a band of these runs round the top. The corners and beading are excellent. Inside, the walls are covered with the remains of frescoes, and, alas! also with the handwriting of Russian tourists, who seem to be as bad as the proverbial John Smith and James Brown in their fondness for desecrating with their names the places they visit. These frescoes have no great artistic merit, but the colours used must have been good, as they are still brilliant. Apparently they represent the progress of Christianity from the Flood, as the one nearest the western door on the right hand side depicts Noah and his

family coming out of the Ark, followed by a wonderful collection of animals. The others represent different Biblical scenes, ending with the Ascension of the Saviour. While we were examining the frescoes a door opened, and an old man, attired like a priest, appeared. He instantly busied himself to show us everything, including the marks of Turkish sacrilege, for Mussulmans had wrecked the convent and church in days gone by. These bullet marks round the fresco of Our Lord, above the altar, were pointed out by him with grotesque imitations of the report of a gun, for he spoke no language we could understand, while, with evident disgust, he showed the places where they had tried to fire the building. I gave the man a small gratuity and walked out with him to try and obtain a piece of the blue enamel tiles which I had noticed, and was lucky in getting a specimen from a heap of bricks close by. Taking another look inside the church, I was astonished to see a coffin on a stand behind one of the pillars with the name of a person written on a paper placed upon it, but more so when the man by signs explained that it was his coffin! Inquiring from our coachman, I learnt he was an old soldier, wounded in the wars, who had retired to this place, living on the charity of visitors, lighting candles before the

altar, and keeping the church in such order as he could. No priest was attached to it, but many of the villagers came to worship there. His coffin was ready and the grave dug, into which eventually he would retire, all by himself in this lonely ruin surrounded by a wilderness of wood. I left him happy and contented, lighting an extra candle on the altar, and repeating his prayers, perhaps as free from care as any of the sons of earth!

The date of the building of St. Timothy's Church is doubtful; archæologists differ, some hesitating to ascribe great antiquity to it on account of its being built of brick, while others think 700 years have passed since its construction, and I incline to the latter belief. We lunched on the greensward in front of the old gateway, and a number of children arrived from the village bringing plates of nuts, plums, cakes, and fried "mealies" (the Indian corn plucked fresh and lightly singed over the fire, a common, but excellent, Eastern dish); jolly, rosy children, delighted with the few coppers we gave them, and accompanied by our former ferocious friends, the shepherd dogs, now peaceful and eager to partake of the remnants of our lunch.

On the western side of Borjom, about ten miles distant, is another monastery which deserves

mention. The last part of the road for a mile can only be done on foot by a narrow path through overhanging trees. After passing many signs of former habitations at the head of a very narrow valley, with steep rocks on both sides, surrounded and literally overgrown by trees, we reached the outer wall of the Monastir Ver, the Green Monastery, rightly indeed so called, as, amidst the mass of verdure, it took some time to pick out the moss-grown ruins and gray walls. This name has been given to it locally by tourists, little beyond its great antiquity and curious structure being known concerning it. The chapel on the northern side of the enclosure is a plain nave, with a side aisle or lady-chapel on the right hand of the entrance. This must have been formed of fine, large, bold, round arches, situated on the furthest or south-eastern corner of the building. Entering this porch, of which one arch alone remains, I examined the small lady-chapel. It had been evidently the burying-place of a family of rank, and steps led down to a vault, where there were some large stone coffins partly covered with earth. The floor of the principal church was at a much lower level than the side chapel. The narrow slit windows high up in the walls gave but little light, and of this the density of the foliage around was sparing,

so that on descending it was some minutes before my eyes became so accustomed to the gloom as to distinguish anything. The building was of huge blocks of stone, carefully wrought and joined at the corners, but roughly put together in the middle walls. The position of the altar and the places for the priests were clearly to be traced; a rudely carved stone cross was at one end, and apparently there had been a floor half-way up the walls, leaving a spacious chamber above the chapel. The ground was covered with bones, and some sacrilegious archæologists or robbers of tombs had been digging up the graves, and had placed two skulls on a flat stone, facing the entrance, which had not a very inviting or cheerful appearance. I looked into the holes that had been dug evidently in the rudest way, but no relics of the dead, except their bones, were to be seen. Although the chapel faced north and south, all the graves and tombstones were placed east and west.

Passing out, a narrow causeway, with steps running along a battlemented wall, led up to a campanile or bell tower, which is a remarkable structure. The base is about forty feet square; a small doorway, with a cross carved on the stone above it, leads into a chamber arched in the roof, and having the appearance of a dungeon. The

bell tower above is hexagonal in shape, some thirty feet in height, with six openings or arches, and surmounted by a well-carved stone roof with projecting cornice. Mounting the causeway up to the tower, one could see by the line of the walls of the enclosure that the place was capable of defence, and that a look-out could be well kept here, up and down the little valley, while the upper chamber of the chapel with its massive walls and narrow windows could be made a tolerably secure retreat. The corner stones of the campanile are carved with curious devices, one like a pair of scales or measures (perhaps here the monks took their tithes?), and all the buildings are entirely of irregular blocks of stone, of massive size, and very ancient form. A huge font hollowed out of a block of freestone lay broken in half by the side of the tower. The size of the trees around growing out of the ruined walls was evidence that many ages had passed since man had lived here, and the mournful aspect of so many marks of former life, with the stillness of the secluded spot, caused painful and melancholy feelings. Where have all the people of Georgiá gone to? Their castles, monasteries, and villages in ruins tell surely of the inhabitants that once lived in the land; almost every mile on the River Kúra traces of old stone bridges appear; many a

valley shows the marks of former cultivation. It is not emigration that has caused this decrease of the native Georgians. War, strife, and feuds have swept them from the earth! Contaminated through successive generations by continual warring, the nation's power sapped by these fatal courses, its mind turned from peaceful pursuits, the remnants of the people remain to this day a grand nation of natural soldiers, genial and gallant in every grade, but thriftless and improvident and full of decay.

The woods of Mingrelia, Imeritia, and Georgia, more especially those on the Borjom estates, which lie contiguous to the Kúra, supply the timber for Tiflis and the vast country eastwards. It is easily procured, being dragged down the mountains and floated in rafts on the river. Beech, oak, and elm grow to a fair size in places, but the principal trees are *Abies orientalis* (like what our nurserymen call the black spruce), *Picea Nordmanniana*, and *Pinus silvestris*—the Scotch fir. All these thrive splendidly on the mountains, but *Nordmanniana* makes the best timber, and is highly valued; this tree should be more cultivated in Scotland, as it grows well on all soils. I may here correct what I said in a former letter about the Crimean pine. I was right in refusing to name it the Tauric pine,

but wrong in surmising it to be *Smithiana;* it is the well-known *Austriaca;* the great size of the trees leading me into error. The value of timber in Georgia is great and the demand high, but no systematic management is attempted, the trees being cut wherever handy, and planting is unknown. Oak and the best pines are worth 2s. 6d. the foot, lesser qualities from 2s. to 1s. 6d. One would suppose that with such a valuable product proprietors or the Government would interest themselves in maintaining and planting forests, but nothing is being done. The price of timber is rising. Every one says the climate is changing for the worse through the wholesale destruction of the woods, but nobody, not even the Grand Duke, who derives an enormous revenue from this source, does anything towards keeping up the supply for future generations.

How long the kind invitations of friends, and the pleasant excursions to be made among the ruined castles and monasteries in the neighbourhood, might have kept us at Borjom is hard to say if inclination had been allowed to decide, instead of the hard inexorable law which warns all travellers that time flies, compelling them to move on if they wish to observe fully the countries they visit; and already we had spent ten days in the hills of the Southern Caucasus. Having procured

horses at Borjom with great difficulty, as all the generals and colonels (who always claim precedence on Government service) seemed to be travelling at this time, we left at 10.30 a.m. and reached Souram at two o'clock, an east wind blowing clouds of dust up the valley of the Kúra, heralding the approach of rain. After dinner with our kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. M., we took the train at 5 p.m. Passing Michæloff about three miles down the line, where the railway company has its large workshops and sheds, a beautiful panoramic view of the Northern Caucasus chain is obtained; flake lines of clouds cutting the mountains in horizontal lines, the peaks of Kassbeck and other lofty tops showing clear with their glaciers against the sky. I noticed the same effect here as in the Himalayas, when the sections of clouds or mist seem to divide the mountains in strata, and the tops astonish you, being apparently in another world, till you rub your eyes mechanically to have another look and make sure they are not clouds. The clear bright autumn air made the chain appear close, although nearly one hundred miles from the railway, and we realised Byron's expression of

> The setting sun on rosy Caucasus,

in watching the varying red-coloured tints that

lighted up the landscape as evening advanced. The short "gloaming" had almost departed as we reached Gori, but the light still enabled us to see the fine old castle built on a prominent rock at the junction of the Gori River with the Kúra. The valley stretching northwards into the Caucasus is one of the most fertile in Georgia, and many regrets have been expressed that the capital of the country was not fixed here by the Russians instead of at Tiflis.

Agriculture in Georgia is not at a high standard, but still there is worse in very many countries; the rotation seems to be maize, next wheat (or rye or barley), then grass (self-sown), for two or three years, after which the land is broken up for maize again. This crop must be kept clean, but the others are left to take care of themselves; manuring is a thing unknown, and economy in husbandry is never practised. A large, clumsy, wooden plough, with an iron point, is used, taking twelve or fourteen oxen to draw it, while men sit on the yoke of each pair of cattle to weigh down the plough. Their cattle and buffaloes are of principal importance to the Georgians, yet they build no sheds for them, and keep the animals very badly. The buffalo is the most useful of all draught animals in Eastern parts, and, curiously, is unable to

stand either intense heat or severe cold. In the height of summer the Georgians drive these beasts into the rivers during the middle of the day, and dig holes in the ground, where they house them with straw during the winter storms; but all the food they get is maize straw then, and the weeds by the wayside in summer.

Many derivations of the name of Georgia are given, and the favourite one among the people themselves is from St. George, their patron saint; but this is clearly far-fetched, and I should suppose, although no books of reference give it, that the name is derived from the Greek words γη εοργα (past of the verb ερδω), "the working of the earth," as, from the time of the Greek settlements on the Euxine this land had been famed for its productiveness, and in ancient days the inhabitants were celebrated for their agriculture.

Tiflis, the capital of Georgia, and seat of the Government of the Caucasus, contains nearly 120,000 inhabitants. It derives its name from the warm mineral baths, which are much used. The Georgians called it originally Tbylysys-Kalaky, and its present name has some affinity with the Hungarian Tæplitz, and the Russian word *tyeplo*, which signifies "warm." Founded in 469 A.D., by King Vakhtang, the capital was removed from M'tzkett to Tbylysys by

Datchy, thirty-fourth king, who reigned 499-514. Conquered by Mongols, Persians, Greeks, and Turks, and destroyed eight times, it was completely sacked by Tamerlane in 1387, and lastly by Aga Mahomed Shah in 1795. Georgia was united to Russia soon after this, in the year 1801, and the capital of the province fixed at Tiflis; perhaps Gori would have been a more suitable site, situated as it is at the foot of a fertile valley running northwards to the Caucasus chain; for Tiflis is surrounded by the most barren-looking hills, with an absence of verdure quite distressing to the eyes. It has to depend for supplies upon outlying districts, which renders the price of all commodities exceedingly high. The Borjom and Imeritian forests supply the timber for buildings and fuel at an extravagant rate. There are a few fine streets and houses in the town, which has a pleasant, busy, and attractive appearance. The bazaars are good; not so dirty as those of Constantinople and Cairo, whilst the collection of articles, Georgian silver-work, Persian enamels and jewellery, Daghestan and Circassian weapons, the armour of the Caucasian tribes, Astrakhan hats of all shapes, Turcoman carpets and dresses (the latter a novelty, even here), is unique of its kind. Although not many years old, the Tiflis museum

is certainly prosperous under the enthusiastic management of Dr. Raddé, who has done wonders with the ridiculously small allowance the Government give. The collections are limited to the countries included in the Government of the Caucasus, and Dr. Raddé has carried out a charming idea of fitting up the large central room as a grand drawing-room, the curtains, carpets, and sofas showing off the brilliant colours in which they are worked in Circassia and Nukha. Groups of figures of the types and dresses of the various nationalities are placed at different points; inlaid cabinets containing specimens of the pottery, and lacquer-work in all metals, with oil paintings of celebrated "ancients," as well as views of lovely Caucasian scenery, adorn the room; all arranged with such excellent taste that you fancy you are in the "salon" of a magnificent château rather than a museum. How preferable to the strict regularity of ponderous glass cases with which English museums, though receptacles of art, are inartistically arranged!

On the ground floor the natural history section is located with equally good taste, large trophies mounting the stuffed specimens of the ibex and goats of the hills, the tigers, panthers, wolves, and other wild beasts; while a semi-circular

embrasure is painted with a distant view of Kassbeck and its neighbouring mountains, the foreground a marshy lake round which all the water birds are grouped. Settees of Daghestan work, under the shade of a giant fern, offer a resting-place for the visitor, where tables with books in all languages and catalogues afford him literary recreation. Dr. Raddé has solved the museum difficulty by rendering its attractiveness pleasurable and complete. In the garden of the museum there are aviaries; and among several valuable birds were two deserving mention. On the very highest mountains of the world a large bird, a sort of half ptarmigan half partridge, is found. I have killed the variety localised in the Himalayas at an altitude of over 13,000 feet. The Caucasian species is white in the throat, and generally lighter in colour, but is about the same size as the Himalayan, and frequents the highest glaciers. Its food is the lichen. How long the specimen here will stand the heat of Tiflis is hard to say, but it was strange to see the bird which never descends from the snow line alive and well at a place as many hundred feet above the sea as its native home is thousands. The other bird I was interested to see in confinement was the lamergir, the noblest specimen, to my mind, of all the

vulture tribe. Its beautiful black and white pencilled plumage and kingly air attract notice immediately. I almost regretted that he was not soaring away over the boundless steppes of Asia instead of a prisoner; but he and all the other birds looked so well and healthy under the fostering care of the doctor, that doubtless they are contented with their lot, nor sigh for change.

What a country is the Caucasus for providing treasures for the museum! There are more reasons than the usual one given for calling this "cradle of the earth," namely, that the Ark stopped on Ararat, and land first appeared here when the waters of the Deluge receded. For tradition in all times has added significant memorials to this wonderful part of the globe, and the histories of the nations that have inhabited it are replete with interest. The number of languages spoken to this day by the different tribes and peoples is a peculiarity, dating, perhaps, from the days of the Tower of Babel, which has always attracted notice from historians, and (while retaining their distinctive character) renders intercourse between them more difficult. The Greek merchants were struck with the variety of languages spoken by the traders who dealt with them along the coast. It is mentioned by Pliny as one of the secrets of the power of

Mithridates, the great King of Pontus, that he could rule the twenty-two nations under him, speaking to each in their own language, without the aid of an interpreter; and now, the inherent pride of the various races, Armenians or Lazes, Georgians or Circassians, is in nothing more apparent than in their jealous use of their separate dialects.

Mythology ascribes many of its wonderful tales to this locality. Among them that the rock upon which Prometheus was bound by the order of Zeus was Mount Kassbeck, a precipitous cliff, which on the southern side blows clear of snow and stands out brown amid a desert of white. Here the ancient legend fixes the spot where the culprit was chained. What more interesting traditions are there than the voyage of Jason and the Argonauts, or the struggles with Amazons and wild races, which mark the dawn of history! And of this the student may have here no end. Armenia claims nineteen centuries before Christ for the kingdom of her race, worthily, amid oppression, retaining by careful education her language, history, and nationality. Herodotus, Strabo, Pliny, and others record the wonders of these lands. The swarms of Medes and Persians whom their monarchs assembled; the victories and defeats of the Macedonians; Xenophon's

great achievement with the Greek cohort; the fields upon which three of Rome's greatest generals—Lucullus, Pompey, and Cæsar—earned military renown, are all historical matters here; and later the progress of the Christian Church, the fight for life which Georgia and Armenia have carried on against Saracens, Persians, and Turks, till the present century saw the great Northern Power cross the mountain boundary to hold by military domination the tribes and people of different sects and creeds assembled here, are subjects which no one can approach without great interest.

While at Batoum I was told that an insect, a sort of beetle or spider, was eaten by the natives throughout the Caucasus as a cure for hydrophobia; and that especially on the north-eastern side, in Daghestan, its cure (even if employed when the person was suffering from the disease) was believed to be certain. Finding that this belief was general amongst the natives, I asked Dr. Raddé his opinion; he at once showed me a specimen of the beetle, the melöe, and said that no doubt the facts as reported to me were correct as far as the implicit belief of the people went, but that he was unable to say whether the insect had really the properties attributed to it. Surely some inquiry should be

made to ascertain if there is any truth in the matter, if there is any curious medicinal property about the beetle, especially as natives seldom make such confident assertions without having some reason and truth to support them. Hydrophobia reminds me that on the Asian steppes, and in all parts of the Caucasus, dogs are a great nuisance, although, in most cases, their "bark is worse than their bite." They attack the traveller with a noisy ferocity appalling to the most courageous person. Mr. S. (who kindly gave us much assistance during our visit to Tiflis) narrated how frequently he had been alarmed by these animals while pursuing the peaceful avocation of a botanical collector. The men in charge never dream of trying to prevent their herd-dogs from attacking you, and the last thing a villager thinks of doing is to call off his hound; while if, in self-defence, you shoot one of the beasts, your life is doubly endangered by an assault from its owner.

The ancient castle or fortress of Tiflis, now in ruins, stands on the south side of the Kur, in the eastern corner of the town, on a hill commandingly placed. An Eastern traveller, in the seventeenth century, wrote that "its circumference is 6,000 paces, the wall 60 cubits high, with 70 bulwarks and 3,000 battlements, but no ditch; . . . in the castle are 600 houses terraced, the

palace of the Khan, a mosque, and a bath." The crumbling walls exhibit some good specimens of brickwork, which other hands, besides those of time, have hastened to destruction. The view from the battlements is glorious: the brown-walled, green, gray, and red-roofed city, lying at one's feet; the busy, bustling hum rising as evidence of its people's activity. Scorched plains and hills stretch for some fifty miles around, but the eye is carried readily over them, feasting itself on the fertile valleys and snow-capped peaks of the Caucasus mountains. The south-eastern side of the hill on which the castle stands has been terraced with gardens from early ages, and here Prince Woronsoff, when Governor of the Caucasus, established a Botanical Garden, which has been carefully kept up, and is now full of rare specimens of flowers and trees. The walks, deftly traced along the hill-side, wind in all directions among shrubs and pines from other lands, affording a delightful shady resort during summer. Tiflis at this time of year sadly wants shade on the north-western side. There is a park on the banks of the Kur, where an agreeable drive can be made; but in all other directions the country around is completely bare, though in ancient times it was covered with wood, and should again be planted. The Government hesitate,

however, to take the necessary steps, fearing the odium that would be excited by any curtailment of the privileges of the goat and sheep herds who now eke out a scanty livelihood with their flocks on these arid steppes. Here is an instance of an all-powerful autocratic Government unable to undertake an improvement for the general good of the community, and powerless to institute local reforms, or to assist the municipality in carrying them out. A deep ravine through which flows the Tsavkysey stream divides the castle hill and gardens from a rocky plateau on which is the Persians' burying-ground, noticeable with their large quadrangular tombs, and beyond is the Tartar cemetery with the little upright stone slabs which Mussulmans use to mark their graves.

The road from the castle passes through the busiest portion of the city, and the bazaar, which we found full of interesting things. It requires an experienced eye to tell the difference between the Armenian and Georgian bonnet, or "koudy," and the Persian hat, and the Circassian or Daghestan "papack," but each race is distinguished by the shape of its head-dress. The Armenians and Georgians wear a round pork pie bonnet of Astrakhan (gray and black); the Persians affect one of a sugar-loaf shape, almost always black. The hill tribes and the Lesghians

and Tartars carry a huge "beaver" terminating in a point; this "papack" is made of black, brown, and gray lamb skins as well as Astrakhan fur, and though heavy, is reputed an excellent protection from the sun as well as the cold.

The number of hatters in Tiflis is astonishing, and the next most numerous class of merchants appeared to be the bakers, their shops being used apparently as eating-houses or restaurants by the populace. The wine shops are also plentiful, with great buffalo skins (bourdyouky) lying outside filled with wine from the valleys of Kahetia. This wine, which is called "kakhety," has a peculiar Burgundy flavour and is excellent, but difficult to transport. The buffalo skins into which it is poured are placed on a cart, and a large flat stone laid on the skin to prevent oscillation as much as possible. In this way the skins are drawn in "arabas" to the Tiflis market, and even over the mountains into Southern Russia, as wherever procurable the wine is in great demand. The usual mode in Georgia of fermenting the wine is to sink an earthen jar into the ground, pouring the juice of the grapes into this, covering the top with clay, leaving only a small reed pipe fixed therein for the gases to escape by. If a less rude method of fermentation were adopted, the wine would surely be better

and more transportable, but the Georgian is a Tory indeed of the old school, and will not change the methods or ways of his forefathers. To show the quantity of wine made in the country I may mention that one buffalo skin (bourdyouky) holds about seventy-five vedros, averaging two hundred and twenty gallons of wine, and that strings of carts laden with these precious hides are met daily flowing into the city. What might not be done with such a product where suitable soil for the purpose seems to be endless ?

We also went to see the Persian merchants, who are located in an ancient rectangular building arched over, with small separate chambers leading off the passage which runs round the building. They are eager to show their turquoise, jewellery, and antiques, or to spread their carpets before you, but "canny" at a bargain and extravagant in their demands; rumour attributing many Jewish qualities to this race.

Tiflis cannot boast of many architectural beauties, but it has one of the oldest Christian churches in the world, the Georgian Cathedral of Zion, built in the early part of the fifth century. The *débris* from the various periods of destruction through which the city has passed has raised the ground around it so that the building lies in a hollow, which detracts from its appearance. The

walls are of fine yellow streaked marble, each stone squared and well fitted—a structure that has happily withstood the fire and sword of the destroyer and the decay of centuries, but the roof and dome have frequently suffered, and in the early part of the eighteenth century they were both renewed. Inside the church, remarkable only for the great thickness of its walls, and the grand Norman-like rotundity of its arches, is said to be kept St. Nina's cross. She was the saint who preached Christianity in Georgia about 300 A.D., and raised a cross made of vine stems bound with her own hair on Mount Karthlos, which cross is, they say, preserved in a silver casket with other relics in the Cathedral. The Exarch of Georgia, Archbishop of Karthlyny and Kakhety, a member of the Synod of St. Petersburg, resides at Tiflis, and is the head of the Georgian Church, which is similar to the Russian in creed; but the Armenian differs, having separated from the others after rejecting the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon, in the fifth century.

The Governor's palace on the boulevard is not striking from the outside, but contains some very handsome rooms, now being prepared for the reception of the Archæological Society, which commences its congress in a few days. One room should be mentioned especially, fitted as a

sort of alhambra, with alcoves of looking-glass cut in various shapes and sizes and hung with richly gilt Oriental candelabra, folding doors opening out into the gardens, with camellias and orange trees and fountains of water in quite an Eastern fairy-like style. The dining-room is hung round with portraits of past Governors of the Caucasus, and here is preserved the Khiva banner, taken by the Russian cavalry in the campaign there. It is mounted on a long silver damascened lance, with a plume of the white yak's tail, stained a violet red, shot with yellow silk, which gives it a peculiar glistening look. The trophy is evidently regarded by the Russians with pride.

An easy excursion can be made from Tiflis to the rock-cut dwellings at Ouplytz-tzykhè, which are well worthy of a visit; the houses, some of them twenty-four feet square, are cut out of the solid rock, not a brick or a separate stone having been used in their formation. Ouplytz-tzykhè, or "the fortress of Ouphlis," was made by Ouphlis, son of Nitskethos, grandson of Karthlos; and Georgian pedigrees aver that the latter was son of Thergamos, who was great-grandson of Japhet, the son of Noah. In Commander Telfer's book on "The Crimea and Transcaucasia," from which most valuable information can be gained, is an

interesting account of these dwellings, from which I extract the following: "This is a town (there can be no other designation for it), consisting of public edifices, if such a term may be employed, of large habitations presumably for the great, smaller dwellings for others, each being conveniently divided, and having doorways, openings for light, and partitions, while many are ornamented with cornices, mouldings, beams, and pillars. The groups are separated by streets and lanes, where steps have been cut for facilitating ascent and descent, and grooves, unquestionably intended for water-courses. There are likewise open spaces or squares, and yet the whole has been entirely hewn and shaped out of the solid rock, demonstrating in the general distribution and economy of space and material, the rarest ability in engineering and architectural skill." *Credat Judæus!* Telfer wonders what the place was for, and thinks it must have been an abode of delight during the oppressive heats of summer. But it is now generally supposed to have been the stronghold (easily defensible from its position in the face of the cliff), to which the Kings of Georgia removed their treasure and valuables, perhaps their families also, on the approach of danger, or in troublous times.

THE CAUCASUS.

THOSE who have read Julius Cæsar's accounts of his expeditions remember how frequently his marches commence with "impedimentis relictis." A journey in the Caucasus affords similar practical reasons for leaving all luggage and lumber behind, simply because you cannot take such things with you. Having packed in as small a compass as possible our "necessities," they were stowed away on the top of the diligence hired to take us over the military road traversing the Northern Caucasus range from Tiflis to Vladikavkas. The conveyance, which is a one-seated brougham inside, holding two persons, has a seat with a hood behind the box, divided into compartments for three, and there is room for another passenger by the side of the driver. The conductor and a guard (a most useless appendage) generally take the box seat and one of the outside places, but having previously engaged the entire

coach for the trip, we put them inside (where they dozed with contented indifference between each station) and ourselves occupied the "machine" outside. Starting early on the morning of the 19th of September, we left Tiflis by the 9.30 a.m. train, alighting at M'tzkett, the second station, thirty miles westwards, where, after allowing us time to reconnoitre the place, the diligence arrived at eleven o'clock. The country all the way from Tiflis along the Kur valley is barren, treeless, and uninteresting; rocky bluffs, without a blade of grass on them, stand out of the plain here and there, and line the banks of the river, which is crossed by a stone bridge where the channel is confined between steep cliffs, the road turning due northwards to the city of Mtzkhetha, now corrupted or shortened into M'tzkett. It was founded by Mtzkethos, the eldest son of Karthlos, after whom this province of Georgia was called Karthly or Kartylynia; the kingdom absorbed or embraced as tributaries the neighbouring provinces of Imeritia, Gouria, Mingrelia to the west, and Kahetia or Kakkety to the east; although the dominion of Karthlos is said to have extended from the Black Sea to the River Aragva, which flowing from the north, joins the River Kur at M'tzkett, it was divided amongst his sons, and the provinces cannot be said to have been united

into what afterwards became the kingdom of Georgia before the reign of Pharnawaz, 302–237 B.C., who first fixed the royal residence here. This king was also famous for having invented the Georgian alphabet. M'tzkett was the capital of the country until it was transferred to Tbylysys in the reign of Datchy (thirty-fourth king), son of Vakhtang, who had commenced the new city.

During the reign of King Miriam, St. Nina converted him and his subjects to Christianity about the year 322 A.D., and close to M'tzkett is the hill of Karthly, whereon stood a great idol, which was overthrown through St. Nina's supplications, and on which her cross of vine stems was raised; in the courtyard of the convent and church of Sampthavrok (which stands on the north-west side of the town) is shown the spot where St. Nina lived after her arrival in 318 A.D. A few dirty cottages, the traces of ancient walls, and buildings are the remnants of the city now; but one feature, the cathedral, exists to mark the history of this once famous place. This church is by far the handsomest building (in a state of preservation) in this country, and perhaps in all the lands between the Caspian and Black Seas. It was commenced by King Miriam upon his conversion "as a sanctuary wherein to deposit the seamless

garment of our Saviour, which had fallen by lot to the Jews of Mtzkhetha, and was brought hither by one Elioz." So says Telfer, but the record of the relic during those three hundred years, and how Nuriam obtained it from the Jews, is doubtful; another authority says the garment was brought from Golgotha by a Jew and buried here. However, the Georgian Church always recognised its authenticity, and, during the Persian invasion, it was sent to Moscow, where it still remains, some say in the Cathedral of the Assumption; but the priests of the Greek Church are very reticent in mentioning the treasures they possess. The cathedral was enlarged in the fourth century by Mirdat III., and rebuilt, in the fourteenth century, by George VI., after its partial destruction by Tamerlane. Cruciform in shape, with fine side aisles, the entrance is on the west end, through a well-arched and decorated porch, the altar facing due east. The pointed dome on a decagonal tower is (as usual) in the centre of the building, and the walls are enriched by mullioned arches in relief and sculptured crosses; a platform with marble canopy, under which the kings sat, is placed in the south aisle, and a few frescoes, representing St. Nina's preaching, decorate the walls; but the roof is whitewashed,

having been thus treated by an ignorant bishop, previous to the visit of the Emperor Nicholas, because he thought it looked unclean. Those who saw the roof before this absurd act say that the frescoes were remarkable. It is to be hoped there is enough public spirit in the Church to have these paintings carefully restored. A high wall, battlemented for defence, surrounds the open square in which the cathedral stands.

The road leaving M'tzkett cuts through a number of tumuli, where a large burying-ground was discovered, with many necklaces, beads, bottles, armour, etc. (now in the Tiflis museum). Some of the open graves, and the bones they contain, eagerly pointed out to us by the conductor, are exposed in the face of the embankment above the road. The man evidently looked upon us as veritable tourists in search of curiosities, and thought the ancient sepultures of M'tzkett matters of much wonder. But he soon gave up interesting himself as to his passengers, and passed the time in sleep, occasionally disturbed by a summons with the whip of the driver to blow his horn as a warning to the long strings of bullock-carts to clear the road in front.

After traversing a broad plain through which the Aragva flows to the east of the road, we

reached Tsylkaun, twelve miles from M'tzkett, and continued our journey with six horses, four abreast at the wheel, and two in front, ridden by the wildest of postillions. The road gently ascends for fifteen miles to Dushet, and our drivers not sparing whipcord, we arrived there in less than one and a half hours from the last station. The horses all seemed in good condition, and not overworked. The coachmen are generally civil and obliging, but the station masters are the reverse, and often occasion travellers needless delay, probably desirous that they should refresh or stop at the post-houses, the catering for which is in their hands. The country round Dushet is well farmed, and the district contains a large colony of Armenians, who evidently have chosen a good soil to settle upon. The town, situated on a southern slope, two miles from the main road, which overlooks it across the Aragva valley, was long the residences of the "eristavs," or Princes of Aragva, a fine square tower on the hill-side marking the site of their palace and stronghold. These princes were frequently in rebellion against the Georgian Tsars, and the town was destroyed by the latter in 1688. Heraclius the Second appointed his son governor of the province, and so fond was he of Dushet that on ascending the throne as King Vakhtang

Heraclius he continued to make it his favourite residence.

With six horses again we reached the next station, Ananour, in about fourteen miles, the country becoming more wooded and wild, and the lofty peaks more prominent. This little village is beautifully situated on a rocky promontory jutting out on the western side of the Aragva glen, and contains a very perfect specimen of the Georgian castle, palace and church surrounded by a square court with ramparts and walls. Bitter feuds were not confined to Scotch clans only, and many are the sad stories which Caucasus chieftainship is responsible for. In 1737, George the "eristav" of Aragva, who lived in this castle of Ananour, was attacked by his neighbour of Ksan, who had hired a band of Lesghians to assist him to revenge the plunder of his brother's wife, who had been delivered over by George to the Persians, and having assaulted the castle, the Prince of Ksan murdered him, his family, and all the defenders. A long stage of seventeen miles brought us to Pasanaur (3,620 feet above sea level), but the delightful scenery banished any sense of weariness from the length of the road. The station master at first said he had no horses, but on mentioning the name of Prince T., who had kindly telegraphed orders ahead

of us, we were soon provided with steeds. Along the fourteen miles to the next station, M'lety, the valley becomes very contracted, long hog-backed mountains in one continuous chain running due south on either side of the Aragva, which appears a silver burn at the foot of the precipitous cliffs. The road keeping the western side in several places is cut out of the solid rock. The shades of evening had fallen, and it was quite dark when we reached M'lety, where we intended to stop the night, and before long, full justice was done to the contents of a basket, which, instead of depending on the food to be found at the stations, we had luckily brought with us.

M'lety (4,960 feet) is the northernmost village on the Aragva, and the road turns off here to cross the pass. Awoke at daylight, I strolled out to look at the quaint little church and peculiar square tower, a few hundred yards beyond the post station. Herds of ponies, strings of "arabas," laden with merchandise (mostly tea), the bullocks, tethered alongside, and some camels, were congregated around, their drivers (enveloped in long black "bourkas," made of sheeps' wool, not woven, but hammered together into a thick durable material) just bestirring themselves, and preparing their caravans for the day's march. This is the principal halting station before

ascending or after the descent of the pass. M'lety may be considered the entrance of the district inhabited by the Ossets, a warlike race, whose origin has been a bone of contention amongst authorities for ages past. It is, however, practically agreed that they are descended from the Alans, who are mentioned by Josephus as living by Lake Maeotis (Sea of Azov) to the north of the Caucasus, who passed the "iron gates," and routed the Medes and Armenians. There is evidence to connect them with the people who were called "Massagetae" by Herodotus, and reputed as great warriors; while since his date (400 B.C.) historians mention them under different names, such as Alains, As, Osses, Yasses, and Assets, but always recognisable from holding the same territory and their distinctive characteristics. Converted to Christianity in the reign of Justinian, they shortly afterwards abjured that religion, but in the reign of the famous Georgian Queen Thamar, they were made again to adopt it; subsequently relapsing. Now no one seems to be agreed as to whether they are Christians, Mahomedans, or Pagans. The best authorities say the race comprises 70,000 souls, of whom 10,000 are Christians, and the remainder hold no belief at all; but those I met said they were Mahomedans.

Telfer alludes to the Ossets as a remarkable people in the History of Nations. Isolated in the centre of the Caucasus Mountains, in the midst of populations with whom they have no affinity, they appear to be the only connecting link between the Indo-Persian branch, and the European branch of the great Indo-Germanic race. Though wild and reserved, these people are not so unscrupulous as many of the neighbouring lawless tribes; perhaps being more numerous, and of older origin and tradition, they are greater respecters of persons. To the south-east of M'lety are the settlements of the Hefsours, numbering 5,000 people; their villages are far up in the mountains, some forty miles from any road, and they claim descent from a band of lost Crusaders who settled in the Caucasus on their return from Palestine. Wearing an embroidered cross on their tunics, also shirts and helmets of mail, they are very quarrelsome and primitive in their mode of settling disputes. Further east from them again are the Pshavs, if anything, more uncivilised and uncouth, but not so obstreperous. Dr. Raddé, who had lived for some time with both these tribes, and has written a most interesting account of them, described them to me, with a shake of his head and a shrug of his shoulders, as "veritable savages."

We left M'lety at 6 a.m., crossing the Aragva, which the road had followed as far as possible. It then boldly ascends the face of the cliff by a wonderful series of long zigzags, 2,000 feet in ten miles. Passing along this succession of parallels, the road is easily seen perpendicularly above, exciting one's desire to be a bird or a monkey, in order to save two and a half hours' circuitous, though easy, climb of apparently so short a hill. On reaching Gudaour, the patches of snow and the sharpness of the temperature testified to the rise we had made, while our appetites did justice to a breakfast, not the worst part of which was an "omelet" which G. was able to make in the station kitchen. From Gudaour (only consisting of the agent's house, stables, and a small soldiers' barrack) the road goes northwards, rising 1,000 feet to the Kreestoonga Yova, or Hill of the Cross, which is the top of the pass —7,980 feet above sea level — the boundary between Asia and Europe.

The morning had been misty, with long, drifting clouds filling the hollows of the valleys, and only seldom revealing the tops, but at ten o'clock, as we waited on the pass, the sun came out, gratifying us with a glorious view. The source of the Aragva lay below, the old drove road marked along its banks, and Mount Kon-

nick beyond it, westwards, surmounting the chain on that side. Northwards rose peak after peak of rough, scarred mountains, the chasms filled with glaciers, and all around green pasture-covered hills, with bushes of rhododendrons, gentians, anemones in flower, to remind us that we were leaving the grassy southern slopes, the rich soil, and the splendid climate of Asia, for a far drearier hemisphere, and perhaps a poorer though more powerful world. Within a few hundred feet of the top were some patches of corn, a rough, wild sort of barley, just ripening but not fit to cut on the 20th of September! On the Asian side cultivation is practicable fully 1,500 feet higher than on the European, but the chief industry of the people is employed in haymaking, provender being much required for the caravan animals; and the slopes of the hills were dotted with haycocks in all directions. Crossing the watershed, and entering a tributary of the Terek, we rattled away down the hill and reached Koby, fourteen miles from the last station, before noon; the road winding about amid rocks and glaciers, and the driver making the old diligence swing round the corners at a merry pace. But our next coachman was even worse, having evidently had his morning "stirrup cup" twice over; he was in exuberant spirits, insisted on our stopping to taste

at a wonderful well, from which, at only a few yards distance from each other, issued a highly-charged mineral water and a sparkling "seltzer" bubbling like champagne (the latter was really excellent); he then proceeded to sit on his reins, and flog his four horses into a gallop, gesticulating with the other hand while he pointed out the celebrated hills, until positive orders made him proceed leisurely.

Two miles from Koby the first view of the peak of Kassbeck is obtained, towering above his neighbours, but a glimpse only is got here, a rapid descent being made into the valley of the Terek River flowing from the east, and turning its course northwards, as the village of Zion is approached. This hamlet is prettily situated, with two or three old square towers and ruined castles, on a promontory at the junction of the two streams, but is fearfully desolate amidst the wildest-looking, treeless cliffs—nothing but rocks and snow to be seen. By a rickety wooden bridge near to the piers of several others that had been washed away, we crossed the wild Terek. The waters lashed into gray-white foam along its precipitous course, the road continuing along the eastern side until reaching the village and station of Kassbeck, where some curious tumuli and ruins are to be seen. A number of

valuable gold ornaments and curiosities were found here, showing that the place must have been a residence of importance in ancient times. The church also, with an odd little stone bell-tower in front, is worth examination; but travellers look at none of these, face to face at last with the historical Mount Kassbeck glistening with the sunlight amid the clouds in mighty grandeur, a king among his subject mountains! The altitude is generally put at 16,546 feet, but some Russian engineers have lately asserted that it is higher. Of a sugar-loaf or bell-topped shape, the mountain stands out by itself some 6,000 feet above the craggy chains of hills around. On the top of one is the church, tower, and monastery of Sameba, "The Holy Trinity" to which many pilgrimages are made, and whence the only path leads to the ascent of Kassbeck. But although Freshfield has described his accomplishment of the task, and others have since followed his route and reached the top, Russian officers and the natives generally ridicule the statement, declaring that human beings cannot live or breathe at such a height. Of course this is absurd; there is no doubt Mr. Freshfield accomplished the ascent. From earliest ages this mountain has been venerated; overshadowing the only pass through the mountains between the two

hemispheres, it naturally attracted interest, and became surrounded with superstitions. The torment of Prometheus was believed to have occurred here, and the victim bound to the steep brown cliff on its southern face. Amid its perpetual snows, it is said that Abraham's tent is preserved! The Christian Ossets and other tribes call it the "Mountain of Bethlehem," and they attribute peculiar sanctity to its rocks and caves, as the abode of the spirits of departed prophets.

The station of Kassbeck is the best place for a sportsman to stop at for shooting the ibex, or Caucasian "tour," and stalkers with guides can be procured there or in the neighbouring villages. An extensive trade is done by the urchins in these mountains collecting specimens of crystal, pyrites, and other ores, which they offer for sale to travellers anxious to carry away mementoes of the country.

The road now passes through rapidly narrowing mountains, and enters the Darial Gorge, which continues almost the whole of the eleven miles from Kassbeck to the next station, Lars. This famous entrance (the Portæ Caucasiæ) is mentioned by all writers from the earliest ages as the high road between Europe and Asia; Strabo and others called it the defile of Aragva,

thinking it and the Terek were one and the same river. The origin of its present name is doubtful, but the nearest derivation is probably from the Turkish words "Dar-yol," the "narrow road." Through stupendous granite and porphyry cliffs this natural passage has been cut, leaving in many places only room for the river, and for many miles the course of the road had to be blasted out of the rocks. At the most desolate and dreary point in the succession of naked precipices stands the Darial Fort by the bank of the river, and above it the ruins of the ancient castle (attributed to Queen Thamar), which defended the pass. Near here in 1803 the Ossets tried, but failed, to rescue Queen Maria, who was being conveyed to Russia, having never acquiesced in George XIII., her consort's, renunciation of the crown of Georgia to the Tsar. After leaving Lars the Terek Valley widens out, birch and oak trees appear, and from the last station, Balta, charmingly situated in a well-cultivated and wooded glen, the road passes for eight miles over an undulating plain terminating at Vladikavkas. The length of the military road is about 170 miles. It is unquestionably a fine piece of engineering; it was commenced in the governorship of Woronsoff, and finished in that of Prince Bariatinsky.

Although the ascents are great, the inclines are so good that horses can trot the whole way. It is impossible to speak without high commendation of the pluck and toughness of the horses in the Caucasus. Experience made us think grays the best, but the preference was perhaps invidious. They are about fifteen to fifteen and a half hands high, stout and "cobby," but active, with apparently little Arab blood. Two things on the road are disgraceful — the state in which the stations are kept, and the inattention of the station masters to travellers. The Government give an enormous subsidy to the company that manages the posting, horses, stations, etc.—so large, indeed, that they are independent of the public, under no necessity to work for a larger profit than is thus secured to them, and therefore supremely indifferent to the cleanliness of the "hospice" and the convenience of travellers. Another road is in the course of construction further westwards from Vladikavkas to Kutais, for nearly 200 miles, over, it is said, a better and formerly little known pass. Let us hope that here arrangements more agreeable to visitors and travellers in the Caucasus will be made. Although constructed for military purposes, the Tiflis road is a great commercial success (notwithstanding that it took fifteen years to

make, and cost £4,000,000 sterling), but following the old caravan line, traders have adopted it with the employment of bullock carts, and the traffic is immense.

The town of Vladikavkas, from two words signifying "to hold the Caucasus," was founded in 1785 by Potemkin as a military station (almost in the centre of the disaffected tribes), and has since continued on those lines as one of the most important posts in Caucasia. It is situated on the northern frontier of the Ossetyan country, that of the Tchentchen and Circassians lying eastwards, the Ingush and Kaberdynes to the north, and the Swaunaty westwards, while all along the valley of Terek are Tcherkess and Cossack settlers. It has been a difficult place to manage amongst all these wild tribes. A few years ago it was impossible to have a light in the houses of the town before shutting the inside shutters, for fear of receiving a salute in the shape of a bullet from some passer by. The roads were impassable after dark, and even now there is some risk to unarmed travellers in lonely places, two or three outrages and murders having lately occurred in the neighbourhood. The officials plead an improved state of matters, and that lawlessness is on the decrease, but Colonel A. (the most courteous and intelligent of "chefs de police") complained

bitterly of the inadequacy of his force, and the impossibility of keeping order with the means and material allowed him. A policeman's pay is twelve roubles (about £1 5s.) per month; as Colonel A. said, it was beyond his power to keep good men at this wage; in summer they could earn much more, and in winter all the scamps in the country offered their services. It does not hold the men above the temptation of a bribe; and therefore in most cases they "stand in" with the robbers. The mails and the Government money have been frequently robbed, and some amusing stories are told of the methods employed. On one occasion, "the party" having muffled their horses' feet on a dark night, rode alongside the "pereclodnaya" in which the roubles were being conveyed (the driver and two guards with cocked pistols being on the seat in front), and sticking their daggers into the bags, the coins which littered the road were picked up by their friends with lanterns afterwards, and the loss was not discovered until the mail stopped at Vladikavkas. Another time on the railway the robbers got into the money van, overpowered the guard, and cutting a hole in the floor of the carriage, dropped the money through it, to be secured by accomplices along the line. In neither case were the robbers apprehended.

But the people commit these crimes from want alone. Starvation makes them thieves, and the absence of employment encourages robbery as a necessity. Horse stealing is a favourite pursuit, especially with a Mussulman tribe, the Ingush, and to an "aoul," or village belonging to them, I drove about eight miles from Vladikavkas along the north road. At short distances high platforms are raised for watchmen, who give signals by day or light fires by night to summon the guard (posted every ten miles) if any depredations occur. On the road Mr. B., a Russian gentleman who has some extensive orchards and lives near, drove with us to the "aoul" to call on the head man, well known to him. We were instantly surrounded by a posse of fine-looking fellows, all fully armed with their daggers and knives, who escorted us to the chief's house, consisting of two small rooms (one for the family, the other the guest chamber), the walls and floor beautifully plastered with brown mud, looking almost equal to Portland cement. The man was most courteous in receiving us, and showing us his habitation, which stood, like all the rest of the houses in the village, in a separate enclosure, with a paddock and orchard. It was sad to see so many able-bodied men about, apparently with nothing to do. The people of these tribes are born carters; their

trade is driving a cart, with two or four bullocks, carrying grain, hay, or merchandise by contract, and if only the Government would institute some works (with the view of finding employment), such as road or railway making, or canal cutting, they would improve the country, increase communication and commerce, stop robbery, and preserve the people, who are gradually disappearing or dying out.

The view, driving back southwards, of the panorama of the mountains, with Kassbeck "showing his nose" in the far distance, was very grand. Perhaps the founder of the town selected the site on account of the prospect to be obtained, as in many ways it is not suitable, being on a flat plain, the River Terek flowing in the midst. Since the railway came its commercial importance has increased. Astrakhan skins and furs, Circassian carpets, swords, daggers, and ironwork (in which the Ossets excel all others) are the objects of commerce, while local manufactures of "bourkas," and silver and gilt braid (in great demand for belts), yield an extensive trade, capable of considerable development.

In the country of the Tchentchen, a tribe of Mahomedans to the east, there is high up in the mountains an enormous iron ring with a staple firmly fixed in the face of a cliff, and tradition

avers that when waters covered the land, ships were moored to this! It would be imprudent to hint at your disbelief in the presence of the natives, as veneration is not the word for their sentiment on the subject, and a watchman, relieved at certain periods, lives in a cave below it to keep guard. Whatever the history of the ring, there are many indications that the falling or retrocession of the waters, or perhaps the breaking up of the glaciers, was later in point of time on the northern than on the southern side of the Caucasus range.

Another curiosity, but a natural one, in the hills not far away, is a table mountain, the top of which is scooped out like a saucer, evidently by the action of ice, and which now contains a large lake! Red and roe deer, ibex, wild goats, tour, bears, and wolves abound in the Caucasus; but a sportsman has great difficulties in making arrangements to pursue them. Without doubt the best place to start from is Vladikavkas, because the north side of the range is the best for four-footed game, and trustworthy guides (an indispensable requirement) are more likely to be got here. A bell-tent, portable bedstead, and waterproof wraps, in fact the kit required by a traveller in the mountains, should be brought out from England, as very few Russians think of sporting, and such

articles cannot be got in this part of the Tsar's dominions. As if to be as ill-natured as possible, to give us a cold, foggy, European greeting, reminding us of mackintoshes and umbrellas (things antediluvian in Asia!), the weather destroyed an expedition we had planned by breaking into torrents of rain, and left our only resource in the bazaars, where we bargained for "bourkas," the warmest and most sensible of cloaks, especially for equestrians.

The storm of the previous day had barely cleared away, and the morning was bitterly cold as we left Vladikavkas at 8 a.m. on the 23rd September. Russian trains start from the termini punctually, but seldom keep to their time, and, although the carriages are comfortable, the practice of allowing passengers to pass through them from one end of the train to the other (some forgetting to shut the doors behind them) occasions frequent draughts and discomfort. As the train neared the station for Piatigorsk the sun came out, clearing away the mists and opening a view of the Caucasus chain. Piatigorsk, one of the earliest founded sanatoria, is celebrated for its mineral waters. It is well situated on a hill detached from the great line of mountains, of which it commands a fine view. The Russian Government spent large sums in making and building

the place, and now allow the province of Vladikavkas a liberal bonus annually for its maintenance, which is let out by contract to a Jew, but the money oozes through many fingers (it cannot melt of its own accord!). None reaches the Jew, who therefore does nothing, and the authorities cannot pull him up for breach of contract, knowing well he is not to blame. Piatigorsk therefore suffers and tumbles to pieces. About two o'clock we came in full view of Mount Elbruz, covered with snow almost to its base. A dark line, marking a gorge down the centre, makes it appear double-headed. Elbruz, with the highest altitude in Europe (18,526 feet), from its breadth and size standing out by itself from the lesser peaks of the chain, is a grand mountain, but lacks the tapering form and elegant shape of Kassbeck. There is something fascinating to me in gazing on a mountain. It is a feast to the eyes! and my sympathies are with the ancients who reverenced particular hills. I remember being roused from my tent in the Himalayas at daybreak one morning to see the Nunkur Purbat, the highest peak between Cashmere and Yarkand, and found the natives salaaming and kneeling in prayer while they watched it, the rising sun illuminating its sublime position with every imaginable tint. Who has not got a particular favourite peak

deeply graven on his memory? whether it be Loch-na-gar, or Schehallion, the Matterhorn, or Kassbeck?

The train, true to Russian instincts, crawled on, enabling us to watch Elbruz and his snow-clad neighbours to our heart's content, till the sun set with a lurid, ominous light, which prophesied storm; and during the night hail and rain and snow pelted down, delaying the train, chilling its occupants, and covering the steppe with a white canopy. We reached Rostoff on the Don at 9.30 a.m., two hours late, and missed the train for Taganrog. Being informed that a boat was starting down the river, and being assured that it would reach Taganrog in eight hours, we proceeded in the steamer at twelve o'clock. As a caution to travellers, I recommend them never to travel by the vessels of the Volga and Don Steamship Company. They never keep time, the boats are bad, and the accommodation for passengers — none! We were fated to have hit upon a particularly bad boat, the *Donetz*, with a crusty, incompetent, old captain, who consulted each of his crew by turns as to where the best channel was, and of course stuck on one of the numerous mud banks at the mouth of the river. Rostoff is an important town, being one of the few places which the railway serves commercially, the usual

way in Russia having been to disregard the cities when making the railroads! Canals connect the upper parts of the Don with the River Volga, which assists in yielding an extensive trade. The ancient name of the Don was Tanais, its course is 1,300 English miles, but it is navigable for only about 440 miles. The right, or north, bank of the river is considerably elevated, but the left bank is low-lying, a continuation of swampy ground. Rostoff stands well on the rising ground on the north side. The railway crosses the River Don by a long lattice-girder bridge, with a swing in the middle to let ships through. A striking view is obtained of the masses of rafts of timber floated down in the summer, covering the broad surface of the water; some of the rafts we passed must have been 200 yards in length and 100 in width, with little wooden huts for the men in charge, and bearing coals and barrels of merchandise; they are not so well built as those on the Rhine. Corn is taken down in barges to be loaded into ships which have to lie out at sea. All the country from Vladikavkas, the Valley of the Don (and indeed the whole of Southern Russia), consists of vast undulating plains, with three to four feet of fine black soil, capable of growing the finest crops, but comparatively they produce little. Russian farmers sell their best

seed, and sow the worst they have, continuing the wheat crop from year to year till the land is either exhausted or choked with weeds. They then take another piece of land, repeating the same treatment. Acres with them are certainly so numerous that tenants are at a premium.

Little heed is taken of the best methods of agriculture. The soil is drawn as far as it will go, and the crop left very much to take care of itself. The present value of good arable land is twenty-five roubles per dessiatine, equal to two acres and three-quarters, making the value in English money at the present rate about seventeen shillings per acre. All over Southern Russia from the Caspian Sea to the Pruth River the fee simple of first-class corn-growing land can be bought at this rate. I, of course, except estates that have been well managed, and particular spots where a better class of husbandry has been practised ; but both these are very few and far between, scarcely deserving of mention. There is some good farming in the Podolia district and near the large towns in the south, also where there are any German settlements. It is surprising that with such a good subject better crops are not raised, that no improvement in agriculture is made, and that with such cheap land outside capitalists do not speculate, even if the peasants themselves fail to reap the

benefits of it. The country seems depressed, and the ordinary attractions which would encourage industry at home or tempt foreign investments do not exist.

But I must leave any further speculation on this state of things, and finish my account of Russian farming. The land that is not ploughed and sown with cereals is allowed to grow weeds and wild grasses, which are mown and stacked, whether wet or dry, into haycocks. The cattle are allowed to shift for themselves, and in winter have no stables; but stand nearly up to their backs in an open court with mud and slush. The manure is collected and dried in the sun, to be used in making plaster for the walls of the cottages, the fields getting none. During the last five or six years the harvests have been disastrously bad. In 1880, when the promise was good, the locusts destroyed the corn crops, but this season wheats are fair and have been well got in, so that a very large quantity can be exported from the country—a good turn which the Russian peasants and farmers sadly want. The surplus corn now ready for exportation from this year's crop is said to be worth over £40,000,000 sterling, according to the latest published Government returns.

After sticking at the mouth of the Don the

whole night, the steamer started for Taganrog at 7 a.m. The course through long shoals of sand is well buoyed, but the depth of water is very little; and although the *Donetz* only drew five feet she managed to run aground, and we had the pleasure of seeing the boat for Kertch (which we wished to catch) start from Taganrog, about eight miles away, while we were recumbent on the sand. The northern parts of the Sea of Azov, and the communication with the River Don and the towns of Rostoff and Taganrog, are vexatious places for ships and sailors.

At the best of times only vessels drawing eight feet of water can get up to Rostoff, and those drawing about ten feet can sometimes come alongside the wharf at Taganrog, but when the wind is in the east or north half this water runs away in both places. Big ships therefore are compelled to lie out in the roadstead, twenty, often thirty, miles from the ports, and have to take in their cargoes from barges and small vessels in the open roadstead. The greatest depth in the Sea of Azov is forty-four feet, and the major part averages from twenty to eight feet. A strong current sets southwards through the Straits of Yenikale and Kertch, which, assisted by winds from the north and east, lowers the water level very quickly indeed. Few places have

been the scene of such continuous strife as Taganrog and its neighbourhood, and a memorable battle took place close by in 1224 A.D., when the Mongols gained a decisive victory over the Slavonians or Russians, and it was shortly after this that they separated into the three separate kingdoms, or Khanates, of Astrakhan, Kazan, and the Crimea. Strange that unable to check the Tartar hordes for so long, and after this defeat, Russia should persistently and gradually have conquered and annexed not only these three Khanates, but nearly all the original country from which her former invaders came. It would seem as if there were some inevitable decay which ensues after the rise of nations, whether savage or enlightened, in all the varied difference of their several histories, which eventually produces their fall. Taganrog has the right to suggest such reflections as these, being memorable as the place where Alexander I., probably Russia's greatest ruler, died in 1825; Europe had to thank him for checking the career of Napoleon, and his own subjects for many beneficent works; a fine bronze statue is erected to his memory in the centre of the town. Another thing worth seeing at Taganrog is a grove of oak trees planted by the Tsar Peter the Great. A drive of four miles by a rough road over the

steppe northwards brought us to a dell which contains a considerable wood of scattered oaks, all doing remarkably well. Roads have been made in certain parts and some shrubs planted, the place being "affected" as a summer resort by the Taganrogians. Russian authorities declare it is no use planting trees on the steppe as they won't grow, but die as soon as the roots strike the pan some four feet down, so arboriculture is a thing unknown. But I examined the soil here, and found it similar to what I had seen all along the steppes, yet the oaks were flourishing splendidly, their roots made no difficulty with the pan, and trees rarely do unless they are deluged as well with spring water below; so either Russians nowadays know nothing of forestry, or Peter the Great knew more—which I am inclined to think he did.

Being desirous to see Kertch, we left Taganrog on the 27th, the morning bright and cold, but by the time we got on board the s.s. *Bessarabia* in the roads, to which a small paddle-boat conveyed the passengers, it had begun to blow from the north-east. With difficulty the steamer cleared the sands, the water falling rapidly, and by night the wind and rain had so increased that the captain wisely decided to stay at Berdiansk (where we called for passengers, but none came).

And here, in the best anchorage which the Sea of Azov boasts of, we stopped for thirty-six hours, riding out one of the worst gales ever known in these parts. Berdiansk was founded by Prince Woronsoff in 1827, and could be made a good commercial port Large coal-fields exist but a short distance northwards, and railways only are required to open up these and the agricultural districts. During the afternoon of the 29th the storm abated, and we left the roads a scene of wreckage and disaster; four barques had dragged their anchors, and lay on the sands near the lighthouse, and many others were damaged. The sailing ships trading in these seas mostly belong to Turks, who lay them up during winter and in bad seasons when there is no trade in corn. This having been the case for many years past, the neglected vessels are in a rotten state, and with direful effect has this autumn gale come upon them. Reaching Kertch the following morning, the effects of the storm were everywhere manifest. A large ship had been washed on to the rocks by the sea-wall, over which the waves had dashed, carrying the bathing-houses away, and inundating houses in the town. The Straits of Kertch or Azov and of Yenikale (at the northernmost point between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov), are surrounded with the greatest historical

interest. The channel was first called the Cimmerian Bosphorus, after one of the earliest known races, the Cimmerians, who (according to Herodotus) were driven out of their country, which extended from the Danube to the Don, by the Scythians, and settled in Asia Minor, *circa* 630 B.C. Rawlinson, in his "History of Herodotus," remarks:

> While the Cimmerians, whom the Scythians drove before them with such ease on their first passage of the Tanais (the Don), continue to exist as Cymry in the mountains of Wales, and the Getæ, their neighbours upon the west, have their descendants among the great Gothic or Teutonic family by which nearly one-half of Europe is still occupied, the Scyths have disappeared from the earth.

This is the more remarkable when one considers the extent of country they held, the "tumuli" and mounds which remain as evidence of their numbers, and the accounts both Herodotus and Strabo give of their manners and customs, showing them to have been a powerfully organised people, though semi-barbarous. Perhaps among the crowd of nations south and east of these lands which the conquering sword of Mahomet compelled to follow his standard and adopt his creed, antiquarians will some day discover a trace of these missing people. After resisting the invasion of Darius, the Scythians appear to have

fraternised with the Greeks against their common enemy. At all events they allowed them to settle on their shores, and the first Grecian colony, founded by the Milesians, was on the Bosphorus (from *βους-πορος*, "the passage of an ox"), in the sixth century B.C., on the site where now stands the town of Kertch. They called it Panticapœum, being dedicated to the god Pan, and for 500 years it preserved its independence and power, holding the great commercial position between the Euxine and the Mœotian Lake.

In the year 115 B.C. Parisales surrendered the city (now called Bosporus) and their country, with the town of Phanagoria on the opposite side of the Straits, to Mithridates Sufator, and here, on the hill overlooking the bay, is the rocky mound, the site of his ancient judgment hall, where the great King of Pontus sat as ruler over his vast dominions, comprising twenty-two nations; he died by his own hand, disgusted at the treachery of his sons, a victim to the power of Rome; and thereafter the kingdom remained nominally subject to Roman authority for more than 300 years. The Scythians had been weakened by the inroads of the Alans in the first century, and next came the Goths, who took the whole of the Taurida. The Huns launched their invading hosts against them, but still the coast and Bosporus was known

as Gothia, and peopled by Goths when the Genoese obtained a footing here in the thirteenth century. Cerclus (as it was then called) rapidly rose in importance under the Italian rule, and for 200 years was the chief seat of their power on the coast. Falling to the Turks in the fifteenth century, Kertch was ceded to the Empress Catherine in 1771 by the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainardji. In May, 1855, the British and French forces of 15,000 men attacked and took the place, gaining entrance to the Sea of Azov, where, during the ensuing summer, they made expeditions, landing their men at different points to destroy the Russian stores, and interrupt their communications between the Crimean peninsula and the mainland. This must have made a deep impression on Todleben and the Russian authorities, for they have done their best to prevent Kertch falling again into the hands of a stranger. An enormous fortress, a succession of masked batteries two miles long, entirely commanding the narrow strait through which vessels must approach, have been constructed at a fabulous cost; an absurd expenditure of millions! If the shades of those great fathers of commerce who once lived here could rise, what judgment would they deliver upon the costly Pavlosky Fortress, the harbour neglected, with accumulating sands, and the

interests of the sword predominant over those of the ploughshare? Melancholy describes the feeling with which I contemplated the ruins of former greatness on one side, and the evidence of modern power on the other. We went to the museum, where the curator kindly showed us the specimens of Greek and Italian art found in the tombs around. The best have been sent to St. Petersburg, but still many treasures remain.

We drove through circles of tumuli to the great Royal mountain, "Tsarsky Kourgan," two miles away. This is the largest and best preserved tomb, a mound fifty-six feet in height and 840 feet in circumference, covering a beautifully constructed dome of stones, projecting over one another (in the form of a conical arch) until they meet. Standing on the summit of Mithridates Mount, the two seas lying before us, the richest provinces of earth around on all sides, it was impossible not to reflect on the past or think of the future. Will the nation now here learn nothing from the history of Kertch? Will they do nothing more than spend vast sums in military displays? Perhaps the memories that hallow this most ancient settlement (the first spot which Grecian civilisation touched in Russia) may some day spread and rouse better feelings among the people. The prosperity of millions,

the fate of empires, and the peace of the world will be hanging in the balance. Will their future be worthy, will their rulers learn, amid these monuments, to avoid the errors that wrecked former Powers, and the nation emulate the true greatness of her predecessors? If with this end in view, the Russians consider the destiny of their magnificent empire, they should remember that warlike enterprise, though it may avert internal dangers for a time, does not materially develop a nation, and that their first duties are proper regulations at home, and the needful improvement of their country in education and liberty.

ATHENS.

"ATHENS, *November*, 1881.

"MY DEAR D.,

"You ask what has become of us since we left the Crimea in an almost dilapidated state last month, after the great storm in the Sea of Azov. We coasted round the Crimea, and went to Odessa (the only European town in Southern Russia, in the sense of having good hotels, shops, and other comforts), and thoroughly refitted ourselves with numerous dinners at the hospitable house of Mr. S. and other genial hosts, doubly grateful after the poor fare we had partaken of in the Caucasus. What with parties and the opera, we had a gay time, and I was fortunate in meeting Prince D. and other Russian statesmen, who discoursed freely on political questions concerning their country and Eastern matters.

"We left Odessa for Constantinople in the

s.s. *Oleg*, on the 18th of October, and reached our destination early on the morning of the 20th; of course the Turkish guard at Kavac was not up to give us 'pratique' until about 8 a.m.; there was one advantage, however, in his laziness, as it enabled us to see the Bosphorus on a fine bright autumn morning, with the charming tints at this season of the year enhancing the loveliness of these glorious straits.

"We stopped at Constantinople a fortnight, and enjoyed ourselves.

"I believe the two men on earth who are most frightened to show their noses in public, are the Emperor of Russia and the Sultan of Turkey; both are terribly afraid of their lives. I went to see the latter potentate attend mosque on a Friday, he came by a back road from the Yildiz Kiosk (his palace on a hill outside the town beyond Pera); you had to crane your neck over the heads of regiments of soldiers to get a glimpse of him as he rode up to the door of the mosque, an ordinary mortal in a terrible funk! 'Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown,' even if defended by the fanaticism of the faithful followers of Mahomet!

"But we had to thank his Imperial Majesty for a gracious condescension in allowing us one day to have a private view of the old Seraglio

palace, and the Sultan's treasury; there was much parade over the visit, and the gentlemen in black clothes (for all the world like ushers at a school), who opened the double-locked doors, and mutely paraded after us while we passed from room to room, made the visit inexpressibly funny; we felt there was some mockery in the magnificence!

"But for treasures take me there! If ever Constantinople is looted by a band I may be connected with, I know the spot to make for! Each Sultan when he dies is venerated by having his best mosque-go-to-meeting clothes, head-dress, turban, aigrette, jewelled collar, and other trappings carefully preserved in a glass case on an effigy of himself.

"I broke the tenth commandment often that day, and when the Turks are kicked out of Europe I should like to have a 'chance' at those pink pearls round the neck of him who was Sultan Mahmoud, as my share of the spoil!

"Coffee, cigarettes, and roseleaf jam were served to us in the drawing-room of the Bagdad Kiosk which overlooks the famous gate on to the Bosphorus, the gate through which many a Turkish lady, and many a rebellious subject, and many an aspirant Greek, Bulgar, or Roumelist has passed to find an unknown watery grave. The view across to Asia to the east, down the

Sea of Marmora on the south, and northwards over Stamboul to Galata up the reaches of the Bosphorus is very delightful; but in this unoccupied palace (its hidden treasures locked away), the view, the place, the day all beautiful, nothing was to be seen but decay and neglect everywhere triumphant.

"We left Constantinople in one of the Austrian Lloyd's boats on the 4th, and cleared the Dardanelles the next day, with a hard driving wind from the north, so cold that off Tenedos on the morning of the 5th there was ice on the decks of the ships; reached Athens the morning of the 6th, and, as if to make us doubly delighted with this enchanted and historically hallowed spot, a beautiful balmy day greeted our arrival.

"My sensations on viewing the Acropolis are best described in Professor Mahaffy's book, 'Rambles in Greece.' I found it lying on the table of the 'Salon de Lecture' of the 'Hôtel d'Angleterre' some days after we came there; he does not overcolour the picture, nor overdraw the feelings which present themselves to any one fond of scenery, history, and majesty.

"Come to Athens! There is more to be found here that is pleasing to the student and the artist than at any other place that I know of.

"Need I tell you that we spent hours and

days, with Byronic fervour, amid the ruins of the Parthenon and the Erectheum, or that I imagined myself a second Demosthenes addressing the Athenians from the Pnyx. (N.B.—What a platform that is, with the rising rocks behind it and the sloping ground below, fitted exactly for open-air orators with iconoclastic voices !)

"Our first pilgrimage outside of Athens was to Marathon, a five hours' drive through a rough country, with poor soil and a bad road. Heather, thyme, stunted firs and olives (with here and there patches of corn and small vineyards) are the products of the land. We lunched on the mound where the Athenians are supposed to be buried and the lion was set up after Miltiades' great victory over the Medes, 490 B.C. ; the plain in front of us relieved by the crocodile-backed isle of Eubœa, sunlit with every imaginable radiant hue, to the eastward.

"On our way back we inspected the spot where poor Vyner, Lloyd, and Herbert, with the Muncasters, were captured by the brigands. Happily, travelling is accomplished with greater safety now-a-days, but none the less does brigandage create fear in the breast of the 'voyageur.' Our companions to Marathon were Mr. and Mrs. T., and both frequently expressed alarm ; but it was not until we got back to Athens

late in the evening, and I found he had been carrying a loaded revolver all day in a small pocket at his side (which I had been jolting against in the carriage all day), that I realised the apprehensions he had felt. They could not have been greater than mine, if I had known of his precautions; but where ignorance is bliss, etc.

"The Greeks are really making a good harbour of the Piræus, and the place is improving rapidly. A walk along the southern shore of the bay, about a mile and a half, brings you to the lighthouse, and a little further on there is the most interesting thing to be seen, the grave of Themistocles; hollowed out of the rocks, now washed completely by the sea, overlooking the Bay of Salamis westwards, and southwards to the Isle of Ægina, here are the traces of this hero's tomb. No statues or painted glass windows recall his memory, and the sea will soon obliterate what remains of the vault in which he was, by his own wish and direction, buried!

"From the Piræus we hired a boat and rowed out to Salamis, lunching on the island of Psyttalea, where Aristides sulked until his patriotism drove him to join his countrymen on the day of their memorable defeat of Xerxes' fleet. The rock where that monarch is supposed to have sat (on the shore opposite the bay) is pointed out

to the all-believing tourist, the spot from which, on beholding a deed of heroism by one of his vassal queens, he exclaimed that his men had become women, and the women turned into men.

"Dr. Schliemann is here arranging in the museum his famous collection from the tombs of Mykenæ, and under his guidance I have spent many hours among the relics. There is no catalogue at the museum; the Greek Government have not yet been able to afford one, and without S. as cicerone, it would have been impossible to make anything out.

"The most curious things are the gold masks with which these wonderful people, whether Greeks or Phœnicians (?), covered the faces of the dead at their interment. The best formed and engraved mask was found with a skeleton literally covered over with round gold disks (supposed to be robe ornaments), and this Dr. S. pronounces decidedly to be the face and remains of Agamemnon. It is the last thing in the world I should think of, to contradict so great an authority! Indeed three or four pleasant meetings with Dr. S. have so convinced me of his theories, that I am ready to put implicit faith in him and them. We are thinking of starting under his guidance to search for the grave or tomb of

Circe. But I regret to say A. is not respectful enough in talking of these antiquities; and, in fact, jeers rather at their decayed remains, so it is doubtful if my trip to find Circe will come off.

"I am not going to bore you with descriptions of the temples, statues, and monuments we have seen in the course of our three weeks' sojourn here, which have gone by like a pleasant dream; they are described in plenty of books where you can learn all about Ionic, Doric, and Corinthian styles, or obtain the best accounts and engravings of the works of Phidias, Praxiteles, and other sculptors.

"Continually new treasures in the shape of buried statues, when digging the foundations of buildings, are found. A few days ago, a very fine marble, about four feet high, of Pallas Athene was discovered in perfect condition; it is evidently a replica on smaller scale of the famous gilt statue by Phidias, which stood opposite the entrance gate in front of the Propylæum in the Acropolis. The goddess is helmeted, in her right hand a spear, the left resting on a shield from the inside of which peeps the serpent's head; one can imagine the veneration the ancient Athenians had for this splendid representation of their tutelar goddess!

"And oh! the charming walks about Athens, through the olive groves to Cephissia, up Mount Hymettus and Lycabettus, or along the old Attic walls to the sea-shore at Phalerum, and the sunsets over Ægina lighting up the hills and colouring the marbles of the Parthenon with every conceivable tint! Read your Byron! The poet's encomiums are indeed true:

> 'Oh! who can look along thy native sea,
> Nor dwell upon thy name, whate'er the tale,
> So much its magic must o'er all prevail?
> Who that beheld that "*sun*" upon thee set,
> Fair Athens! could thine evening face forget?'

"Here are three touches of human nature before I leave Athens.

"A Greek gentleman, Mr. B., dined with us one night, and described the Earl of L.'s visit to Greece many years ago; in Mr. B. the English Earl found a congenial spirit, fond of the turf; in company they visited the Acropolis, and, after gazing on the ruined Parthenon for some minutes in silence, he turned to his friend exclaiming: 'It reminds me of a broken-down race-horse!' This was his only criticism that afternoon.

"At the same party was another Greek gentleman, owner of an island in the Archipelago once famed for growing oranges, but a blight

on the trees had destroyed his crop for three years past, and he was low in pocket and spirits. He button-holed me, inquiring frequently to my surprise about the wealth and industry of England; at last out he came with the following question: 'Can you tell me how I can make the sum of £20,000?' The abruptness of the inquiry staggered me, but remembering an old answer given by an eminent banker to a similar application (though for a smaller amount), I replied: 'Save it!' The Greek was dumb!

"Our banker at Athens, Mr. T., a kind friend and a very well-informed man, often entertained me with descriptions of his life at Manchester (where he had been for some years) and his experiences since he returned to Greece. He warmly defended his countrymen from the criticisms I made on their manners and customs; when pressed hard by instances of their inconsistency in agitating for the extension of their country by the aid of foreign assistance, instead of devoting themselves to the development of the territory they have already, his reply was always: 'Please remember we are Levantines here!' I can only suppose that this means they are the *exact opposite* in nature and habits to the Anglo-Saxon-Scoto-Celtic race which makes up the 'olla podrida' of beings in the islands to

which we belong, and I believe they are; nevertheless, the Greeks are a clever, superior, and charming people; with their neatly plaited petticoats of linen (in shape very like our Highland kilts) they have quite fascinated and delighted me. I hope you would in this agree, if you came here, with

"Yours always,

"H."

CORFU AND ALBANIA. I.

"YACHT PHŒBE, OFF CORFU,
"*January*, 1882.

"MY DEAR G.,

"Imagine us two on board a forty-ton cutter! a cabin and saloon each about six feet square, with an Italian who acts as our cook as well as our commander at sea, one sailor, the captain's son (steward, bedmaker, and Jack of all trades, in one), another Italian (a shikarry, called a beater in these parts) who accompanies me on shore in pursuit of game, three dogs, and numerous live stock! You will understand that elbow-room is scarce, and nothing but very superior attractions would induce us to occupy such cramped quarters.

"But we have a 'tender' in the shape of a sixteen-ton cutter on which A.'s maid and my servant sleep, and where surplus clothes and goods are stored; this ship we send from Albania to Corfu to bring supplies and letters to us. You will ask what are the attractions?—A glorious

CORFU: CITADEL AND HARBOUR. [p. 218

climate! While you are shivering in the fogs which surround the British Isles, we are feasting under almost a summer sun, with clear frosty nights, but a keen, warm, exhilarating atmosphere (none of your 'mistrals' of Savoy!) during the day. For the best winter climate in Europe commend me to Southern Albania; it is simply magnificent.

"The next attraction is sport, and though rather overdone by the number of English yachts on the coast there is plenty to be got. Small game shooting at woodcock, snipe, and duck of all sorts; larger quarry in the shape of pig and roedeer.

"To proceed to business. My yacht is anchored in a creek on the Albanian coast, and the beater has arranged on shore with one of the head men of a tribe or clan to get together some of his people to drive the ravines, wooded with acacia and oak scrub, for us.

"Breakfast early, and a start about 9 a.m., we land from the yacht and always have a stiff pull up hill; Albania has been paved with sharp-edged stones by some Titanic majesty, the grass growing amongst these rocks disguises the fissures, and hence the walking is about as 'nasty' as possible either to practise or describe.

"We get to the top of a gully (the beaters

with their dogs having remained below), and are posted by the head man in positions commanding the passes up the hill; the clearness of the atmosphere enables one to hear every sound, therefore the great thing is to keep well concealed and perfectly motionless while the 'drive' is going on; if the dogs are good ones they very soon let you know if a pig is in the covert, they generally 'bay' him at first, then off he goes making for the nearest pass through the underwood. Now is your time! If you hear him making towards you, the best plan is to remain quiet; but if he or they (for I have seen as many as eight pigs break at one time) appear to be taking a contrary course, you should slip along the ridge, either to the right or left as required, to meet the 'porker'; he rarely gives you an easy or a sitting shot, more often going as fast as he can through the stunted scrub, allowing you only a glimpse of the bristles on the top of his back. It is sharp shooting with a rifle, and I think the pig has a fair chance.

"The steepest of the ravines, especially those about Paganyar, though the hardest walking, are easiest to deal with, the heights commanding a better and clearer view of the ground. There is much to add to the excitement, for where is excitement without warmth, and where is warmth

without the sun or other genial surroundings? We manufacture these in our northern homes, they are given to us here to our heart's content.

"Constitutional laziness and bad sport (through having, I think, a very 'juggins' of a beater) made me careless of the pursuit of piggy; but I became bitten one day, and though I confess 'the game is hardly worth the candle,' yet at the moment I thought of nothing else. We had had a hard day driving hills and ravines; at 4 p.m. the bag was blank. I stopped back from the other guns, and handing the rifle to my Albanian attendant, took my shot gun from him to get some quail for the 'pot.' I was on the side of a hill overlooking the sea at the head of the gorge which my friends had gone to beat, when the deep-tongued note of the yellow hound 'Bec' (by far the best boarhound on the Albanian coast) proclaimed unmistakably that she had the quarry at bay.

"I regained my rifle and rushed to the ridge to get a view of the hunt. About 400 yards below me (though I might have chucked a pebble among them), the dogs held at bay a large black boar; twisting, turning, and charging them on every side, he made back for the densest part of the covert; five minutes of agitation amid the bushes, making trees and creepers

quake and quiver in all directions, the dogs attacking with low-toned angry snarls, the Albanians behind uttering the most unearthly yells. No pig could stand pandemonium thus let loose for long! and he broke—where? up the hill like the side of a house, as hard as he could pelt straight to me; within about twenty yards he stopped dead short, whether to listen for the dogs, or from having winded me, I cannot say. He only gave me a few seconds, and I hit him behind the third rib; with a bound to the left, he was out of sight before I could get in a second barrel. I ran along the ridge just in time to see 'Bec' with her nose to the ground running mute in front of me. What a glorious chase! Forward over a grass-grown dell, scaring a shepherd and his flock, through 'wait-a-bit' thorns, and over rocks, where, if a foot had gone wrong, I was done for.

"The last rise beat him, and on crossing it I heard 'Bec's' summons; she had him at bay in a thick clump of cover overhung with dense green creepers. Pausing to get breath I followed the sound of her bay, and soon got close to the two antagonists; but the darkness of the foliage, after the brilliant light outside, made it most difficult to see the state of the combat for a few minutes. At last I got a good view through

the branches, and never shall I forget the demoniacal expression upon that boar's face, with the furious dog bristling for a spring within a few inches of his tusks, both of them unconscious of my presence. I shot him through the head, and 'Bec' and I are firm friends ever since in pursuit of the wild boar.

"One of the most sporting bits of shooting in Albania is at the flights of wild ducks in the marshes in the evening. I tried my hand at the game at Livitatza, Triscoli, and Butrinto (the latter being the best place). The marshes are situated on the sea-shore at the foot of creeks in the hills, but more often extend far up the mouths of the rivers. An inspection by day will show you where the ducks come to feed, and as evening approaches you should choose a spot among the rushes or scrub, with some clear water in front of you, and, facing the west, wait the flight of the birds coming in from the sea. Rather weirdly these minutes pass; the quietness around is broken occasionally by the cries of the snipe or the croak of the frogs. Suddenly the whistling whirr of wings, the confidential quacking to one another (according to the habit of duck), and they are upon you. I found the best plan was never to turn round, but to cover a particular spot and not to shoot in other directions. The birds come at

a great pace, but by resolutely observing the above-mentioned rule, one soon gets up to the 'knack' of bagging them. The game lasts about a quarter to half-an-hour, when it gets too dark to shoot. In that short time I have seen a bag of cartridges blazed away, as hard as two guns could be loaded, with not many feathers to show at the end. The best flight I got was during a north-east gale. One evening returning from cock shooting, I observed the duck coming earlier than usual from the sea, probably conscious of an approaching storm. I made for the marshes, wading across the Butrinto River; the birds (a large majority of which that night were teal) came very low, skimming the ground and wheeling across the water in front of us. B. and I bagged over forty head of duck, mallard, widgeon, teal, and pintail, until we were forced to leave earlier than usual, being wet through and very cold. The Italian beaters hate this sport, as they dread the marsh fever; but I never felt any ill effects from it.

"Only on particular days can one get near the wild fowl among the marshes in Albania. When it is fine weather they are generally out at sea in the daytime, but occasionally are to be found inland. One sharp, bright, frosty morning at Butrinto, I left the yacht early, landing on

the south side of the river, and continuing by the course of the stream, came to a small flat marsh surrounded by tamarisk bushes. Paolo, my beater, had a small mongrel pointer with him, as wild a dog as ever went sporting. He rushed into the marsh, springing the ducks in all directions; to my surprise they wheeled, and as the dog returned came towards me. I got some capital shots, and seeing the disinclination of the fowl to leave, sent Paolo round the marsh, concealing myself in the bushes, and secured a good bag; but this occasion, caused, perhaps, by the fine, bright frost, or the attraction of the dog, was the only one on which I have had any sport at the duck by day; there are hundreds to be seen, but in the distance.

"You must always remove the 'innards' of a wild duck in Albania the night he is killed; the bird feeds on a water plant which contaminates the flesh if he is not cleaned, and the consequence to a ship's company of dining off ducks not so treated has been unpleasant, to say the least. I never saw fowl so fat anywhere else, and when the precaution I have mentioned is taken, they are delicious eating.

"Snipe, snipe, for ever! but as wild as the proverbial hawk! I never saw them lie well, and only the pertinacity of an enthusiast like O. W.

in pursuing these birds will enable you to get a bag ; he killed twenty-two couple on the Gomanitza marsh, paddling about in the water up to his knees the whole day.

"It is curious that the Albanian snipe affects the high reeds (which are not, however, thick), and deepish water; I believe they sit on the reeds.

"The beaters in Albania always deplore the scarcity of 'cock,' and repeat mythical stories of enormous bags being made of them in years gone by; they are certainly not as numerous as they were. It requires a very severe winter in Central Europe to bring the birds down the Albanian coast, but you can always get a charming day and a fair bag of them; fifteen to twenty couple of woodcock per gun is sufficient for me. Whether it is the distance he has come or the frequent pursuit of him, the 'cock' here is certainly a wilder and bolder bird than with us in the north, where he is bred. The ground suits him exactly ; at the edge of the marshes and rivers, the cliffs are overhung with acacias, arbutus, oak, and other trees covered with creepers. One gun should go forward, and two other guns walk in line, one below next the marsh, the others above on the hill, the beater with his dogs in the middle. 'Hi! cock! cock!' Out he comes with a dash and a

swing, trying to put any intervening tree between you and him, giving you difficult and very pretty shots.

"But of all the difficult shooting I know of, the wild blue rocks in the cliff caves by the sea are the hardest to hit. I tried them all ways, rowing in a boat and laying-to within shot of the mouth of the cave; a stone bringing them out like fireworks. Another plan is to stand on the top of the cliff, and for some one from below to put the birds out, but they are then even more difficult (darting over the surface of the sea) than when taken as 'rocketers.' As they are first-class table birds, I confess to having descended to a rather unsportsmanlike way of bagging them, by rowing quietly in the boat to one of their favourite caves (which admitted the boat inside) and having a good 'blaze' at them sitting. The reverberations and noise, with the stones detached by the shot, were alarming; but I got my pigeons.

"Inland from Butrinto about six miles are some fine large woods, mostly of scrubby oak (the Albanians cut where they like, and never let a tree get to any size). These are the strongholds of the pigs, but the cover is so dense you cannot shoot them in it. Piggy waits till the dogs come up to him and then usually

bolts back; we drove the woods to put the pigs out to the more open country, and shot the foxes and jackals; they come creeping along in front of the beaters, listening to them and the dogs; you can, by keeping concealed and very still, get some good shots at them. In winter their skins are worth having.

"Yours always,

"H."

CORFU: BAY OF KALIKIOPULO. [p. 228

CORFU AND ALBANIA. II.

"YACHT LIZZIE,
"*February*, 1884.

"MY DEAR G.,

"I promised you a letter, but I have not much sport to record during my second visit to Corfu and Albania, though we have done better with pig and deer than I did before. The first week in January W. G. C. and I got five pigs and three deer, and thought we were in luck; but the weather has been too fine—fancy having to say that! However, I am quite sure that the worse the weather the better bags of all sorts of game are made in Albania.

"It never seems to be bad weather in this country, which enjoys the finest climate in Europe; nothing is done to develop the resources of the land or encourage visitors, simply because it is in the hands of the Turk. It must be confessed, however, that we should have no shooting (such

as it is) if the Greeks got the upper hand and the possession of the country.

"The Greeks are devoted 'Shikarries,' and would shoot everything they see, but the Turks do not allow them to carry arms in Epirus or Albania; so we get the chance, which I for one would willingly give up in favour of the Greek sportsman, if the Turk left.

"The charm of walking these splendid mountains, the scenery and climate, conspired in making me stick to pig shooting most of the time during my present visit, with an occasional 'go' at duck flighting.

"Let me describe my last day's boar hunting. I had failed to get another 'rifle' to accompany me, and after collecting a number of Albanians, started at 9 a.m. from the yacht lying off Butrinto, first beating the rocky cliffs and ravines up to Cape Stilo, my plan being to go ahead of the beaters about a mile, choosing a point of vantage whence I could have a good view; the fourth beat was up a fine gorge in the hills, and an old pig stole away unperceived by me until one of the Albanians on the flank hallooed him. I fired two parting shots and hit Mr. Pig rather far back; but seeing him stop in a thicket a little lower down the hill, I waited at my station for the beaters to come up.

"They had arrived nearly at the end of the covert when four pigs broke, having probably been checked by the report of my shots; the dogs were close to them, and the shot was a hard one, as they were going very fast fully one hundred and fifty yards away—still I never had a better chance of a right and left at pigs!

"I missed my first shot, and hit the leading pig through the stomach with my second barrel; the dogs soon singled him out from the others, and over the hill, down the next gorge, up another face, over the roughest and rockiest ground I know, we gave chase for nearly five miles, when I cried content; all the way we could track him by his blood, and the dogs having outstripped us, I thought they would soon bring him to bay. Thinking if we gave the porker breathing time he would lie down, and the dogs having come back, I waited a little (sending Nicolo to look after the first pig I had wounded, and which I thought would be dead), then got the dogs again on the scent, and followed my friend's trail. We spent the whole afternoon in the pursuit, crossing hills and going through woods, never losing the blood (the deluge was incomprehensible, but pigs *can* bleed!) until at 6 p.m. I gave the chase up, being ten miles from the yacht, and a hard walk back to it; adding to my discomfiture,

Nicolo met us on the way home, having found no trace of the first pig. These Albanians are not to be trusted, and I firmly believe the man had found the pig dead, and hidden him; the pig's skin, tusks, and meat are of considerable value, and if he could have taken him down to a boat and over to Corfu, the pig was worth two to three sovereigns.

"I expressed my suspicions to the head man, Meker, upon which a pretty hubbub arose; twenty Albanians began to talk and argue at the same time, then to quarrel; as I was by myself and understood only a few words of their language, I thought it best to authoritatively stop the controversy, ordering them all to come down with me to the yacht.

"It is a good rule which I have always followed never to pay the Albanians their wages on the hill, but to make them come to the yacht to be paid, so that they know you do not carry money with you when away from the ship.

"Another rule is never to part with your rifle. I do not accuse the Albanians of evil intentions, but in a country where brigandage is not wholly forgotten, in fact has lately occurred, precautions such as these are necessary.

"When I got them down to the yacht, I harangued them through an interpreter, making

them promise to try and get the pigs at daylight next day, and offering liberal 'backsheesh;' but my pigs never turned up. So ended my last and rather unlucky day in the Highlands of Albania. I must not complain, as we have had a most delightful time. Good weather, especially on board a yacht, makes everything pleasant all round.

"One thing has struck me in these parts, that you can make rifle shots hardly thought of in England. Do not call these 'travellers' tales;' but believe me that running shots or snap shots can be taken with a ball in the East with comparative accuracy compared to what is possible in our country. I attribute this solely to the clearness of the atmosphere, which enables you to catch the sight of the rifle quicker. If this is the cause, and the rule holds good in South Africa and other clear climates, it may be the reason (apart from practice, which, of course, is everything) that the Boers are such wonderful rifle shots.

"I have never described Corfu to you, because you care to hear of nothing but sport, and there is little to be got on that island. The Greek scours it in pursuit of every bird and beast. There is a fine marshy lake eight miles inland from the town of Corfu, called the Val di Mopa,

which, if preserved, would be the best snipe shooting in these parts. You have to be up before daylight, and get there at sunrise to be level with the country sportsman, or else the 'loch' would have been harried before your arrival.

"I went there three times, getting eighteen couple of snipe on the first occasion, and on the second securing a 'rara avis,' in the shape of an albino snipe. I have never heard of, or seen, one before; it is a beautiful specimen, quite white; but on carefully examining the feathers, delicately shaded pencillings, equivalent to the painting on the ordinary snipe, are to be traced.

"I visited a third time the Val di Mopa to please a friend, Capt. P., who begged me to come for another day's snipe shooting. The night before there came on a driving storm of rain and wind from the south-east, yet P. said the day would clear up, and keenness predominated over common sense.

"We found the valley in flood, and the burns flowing into the lake coming down in torrents; yet we decided to walk up one side, and back the other, getting a few wild shots on our way. The western side of the lake is partially cultivated and irrigated by broad ditches—these, in their swollen condition, we had to jump; my beater,

Paolo, has a mortal terror of water, and to see him 'funking at his jumps' was most amusing, especially as the whole Italian vocabulary must have been searched for guttural exclamations, if not oaths, as each watercourse came in view.

"The bag of cartridges he carried may have handicapped him, but whatever was the cause, as often as he jumped he fell short and soused into the water. It was impossible not to laugh, and the more we laughed the more angry he became; at last we got to the head of the lake within a quarter of a mile of the place where our carriage was awaiting us, to find to our surprise that here the main river, feeding the lake, entered and crossed our path. The water was rising every minute, and we had to decide whether to risk wading the river or walking all the way back, fully four miles.

"P. got a stick and declared the bottom was hard; asked me to hold his hand and prepared to plunge in. Poor Paolo! when he saw our intention he broke down altogether, swore nothing would induce him to enter the water, called on every saint in or out of heaven, declared we should be drowned, and started to go off back the way we had come.

"I called to him and got my cartridge bag, telling him to go where he liked.

"P. and I successfully negotiated the torrent holding on to one another, and walked quietly home in the comfortable belief that we as representative Englishmen were a great deal better than the representative Italian in the shape of Paolo.

"If we had not had this 'divertissement' to entertain us we should have been horribly bored and have abused everything, whereas a good laugh at Paolo put us in good humour and spirits, though we were soaked to the skin.

"All the best shooting in Southern Albania can be reached from Corfu, to which place it is necessary to return occasionally in the yacht for supplies, and no pleasanter head-quarters can be found. This island shows the difference that can be worked on the earth's surface by the hand of man with care and labour. The opposite coast of Albania is similar in every respect, but there is hardly any cultivation, the land being pastured by flocks and herds. Corfu is one large grove of olive-trees, planted by the Venetians centuries ago; they are said to be the finest and most prolific of their species in Southern Europe. Vineyards and orange-trees, with carefully tended gardens, everywhere betoken good husbandry; and the quaint old town of Corfu, with its citadel and ancient Venetian fortifications, the narrow

streets and high houses of Italian architecture, the fine campanile of the Church of St. Spiridion, the patron saint of the Corfiotes, make up a most picturesque group.

"The island of Vido, which forms the natural harbour of Corfu, was strongly fortified by the English when they occupied the place. It is well worth a visit to see the great blocks of concrete and stone lying huddled in masses after the forts were undermined and blown up by the engineers previous to the departure of our troops, and our cession of the Ionian Islands to Greece.

"If you come yachting to Corfu and the Adriatic coast, remember to bring a trammel net with you; set this in the evening wherever you anchor for the night, and you will not be without a good supply of fish. White and red mullets and sardines abound in all the creeks of the Adriatic; at Santa Quaranta and higher up the coast we got most excellent mackerel, rather larger in size and browner in the colour than our English fish of that sort, and even better in flavour.

"Differing from the Italian adage, 'See Naples and die!' they say, 'If you once see Corfu, you are sure to return.' Whether I visit this locality again or not,

"I remain,

"Always yours,

"H."

MONTENEGRO. I.

"The Hotel, Cettinje, Montenegro,
"*February* 15, 1884.

"My dear Mr. B.,

"I write this from the hotel at the capital of Montenegro, where we arrived yesterday; I shall probably finish it at a later date.

"We reached San Giovanni di Medua on Monday early by steamer from Corfu, and there found a letter from Mr. Green, British Consul at Scutari, saying he had sent horses for us, but having heard a steam-launch was going round to Medua and returning to Scutari, he advised us, if possible, to come by it that way. Luckily we fell in with the agent of the company owning the launch, who had come by the same steamer as we did, and he at once offered to take us; so, feeling this would tire A. less, although longer in time, we sent our luggage by the horses and started in the launch at 9.30 a.m., reached the mouth of the Boyana River, and got safely past Dulcigno and over the bar at twelve. The river is very

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rapid in places, and we did not get along very fast; but this did not matter, as the scenery on both sides is lovely. The salt water had got into the boiler of the launch (as it had no condenser), so we made slow progress in consequence, and only arrived at a point a mile below Scutari at 6 p.m. Here we had to get out and walk, as the rapids between this place and Scutari bridge could not be passed at night. Luckily again there was a good moon, and we successfully travelled the rough Albanian road, and through the old-fashioned bazaar to the modern town of Scutari, where Mr. Green met us, and took us to the apartments at a very primitive sort of an hotel, which he had ordered for us. The rooms were clean, and bare of living beasts (but rats, so F. said), and though the cooking was of the greasiest description, we roughed it pretty well. We dined one night with the Greens, his brother and mother, Lady Green being of the party; a very pleasant one. He is a superior man, and I got much information upon Eastern matters from him. We spent two days in Scutari, devoting the second day, Wednesday, to see the Great Bazaar, when all the mountaineers came in—a motley crew of Highlanders and clansmen, Serbs, Miridites, Greeks, Albanians, Turks, Montenegrins, Dulcignotes, etc., their dresses very picturesque.

"On Thursday morning, having arranged to hire the steam-launch, we started at 9 a.m. northwards up the Lake of Scutari, thirty-seven miles in length. It came on to blow a little half-way up, and we put into a small bay for an hour, when the water calmed, and we went on, reaching Rieka, on the Montenegrin frontier, at 4 p.m. Here horses and carriages had been ordered for us, and we drove to Cettinje by a very well engineered and made road only lately opened. I am sorry we missed seeing the Prince of Montenegro at Rieka. The road rises in five miles by zigzags over 3,000 feet. The hotel we are in (the only one in the place), over 2,800 feet above sea-level, is kept by the Prince for travellers, and is comfortable. This place is very like Ballater, without the heather and fir-trees, but with twice as many stones. The formation is limestone, which turns grayish-white with age, and the rocks have the most weird aspect. The little town is nearly new, and the inhabitants simple, contented, and industrious. We might be in Scotland, and the very hard frost last night, with deep snow upon the hills, completed the illusion. These Montenegrins are the best of all the Sclavic tribes. A. has got some nice sketches. We start to-morrow for Cattaro.

"*February 17th.*—I thought at last our luck

had vanished, and we were fairly in a mess, when yesterday morning I looked out of my window at Cettinje at 7.30 a.m., and saw nothing but snow, nearly a foot deep in the streets, a violent storm raging, and evidently more to come. The chance was that we were stuck at Cettinje for a week at least. I dressed directly and sallied out in the snow to consult the driver of the post carriage, which we had ordered, on the subject of starting or not. He was evidently disinclined to go over the pass in such weather; but eventually he said if we took two light carriages, two horses in each (three would only encumber each other in the drifts), and started at once, we might get through. The hotel keeper advised our going, as, after crossing the top, the lower part of the road would be free from snow. This decided me, and in a blinding snowstorm we left Cettinje at a foot's pace. About noon the snow ceased to fall, and we were saved getting wet from above the rest of the journey; but the drifts got worse, and how the little horses struggled through them astonished us all. We reached the top of the pass, 5,800 feet above sea-level, at 2 p.m., and glad I was to get there, although we missed the view from the top, which is said to be one of the finest in the world, embracing the whole of Northern Albania and the Lake of Scutari, the mountains being covered in

mist. I think the drifts were worse on the north side, but luckily our road was down-hill. We reached Négosh, the half-way house, at 4 p.m., and there rested the horses for an hour, and ate the contents of our lunch-basket, quadrupeds and bipeds sorely in need of both victuals and rest. I walked the last two miles up the pass and the four miles down to Négosh in the snow, which was light though deep. We left Négosh at 5 p.m., in another mile got out of the snow, and had our first view of the Bocche de Cattaro, the wonderful rent made by the Adriatic in the mountains, grand in the light of a lurid and angry sunset! Our little horses soon 'plucked up' and trotted down the seventeen great zigzags, which commence where you might almost throw a biscuit into Cattaro, and run the road 3,500 feet down to the little town by the sea-shore. We arrived there at 8 p.m., and found every place in the town taken up (as there was a great local function going on), although we had telegraphed asking for beds, and had no reply; but when we had almost despaired and believed we should have had to camp out in the public square, a gentleman came up, and with a happy thought suggested our calling at the Austrian Lloyd's Office; there, to our delight, we found the steamer had arrived, and they allowed us to go on board the ss. *Stambul*, which after getting some

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dinner we gladly did, and turned into a comfortable cabin, thinking that luck sometimes, though not always, follows pluck; on this occasion at least our resolution had been rewarded. As the steamer did not leave till Sunday at midnight, we spent a pleasant day at Cattaro, an old Venetian town which was strongly fortified by those active Italians; it is now the southern frontier town belonging to Austria in these parts, and the principal port on the Bocche for the surrounding district. We shall go in this boat along the coast of the Adriatic, touching at all the ports to Trieste, where we are due to arrive on Wednesday evening. A. is very busy sketching, and finds plenty of work for her pencil in this most romantically situated place.

"*February 18th.*—It blew a hard 'Bora,' or north wind, all night, and froze at Cattaro, which place we left by steamer at 6 a.m., calling at all the little ports round the Bocche. The sun came out, and it has been a lovely bright day without a cloud in the sky or a ripple on the sea. We reached Gravosa at 1.30 p.m., where Mr. Stigand, the English Consul, met us, and we drove with him about a mile to the ancient city of Ragusa. This was a republic until 1797, when it came into the hands of the French; for one thousand years it had withstood the power of Venice, and

the onslaught of the Turk. The little State was clever enough to play one potentate against the other, and enjoyed great power, much wealth, a proud aristocracy, and what does not follow, it is said, a good Government! The Treaty of Vienna gave it to Austria, and now all the old nobility are dying out, their palaces falling into decay, and the importance of Ragusa has gone. But the buildings with their fine Italian façades are well worth seeing, and we were charmed with the place. Mr. Stigand gave us tea at his house, and we left Gravosa by the boat at 4.30 p.m. By the way, the boats named 'Argosies' are derived from Ragusa—being a corruption of 'Ragusas'—the appellation for their commercial fleet, which the people of the district called their ships, and which fleet was the most extensive in the eighth and ninth centuries, carrying a *neutral* flag to show they were only traders!

"*February* 19*th.*—We arrived at Spalato at 5 a.m., I was up at 7 a.m., and walked on shore to see Diocletian's famous palace. The building covers nine and a half English acres. You know his history—how he rose from a common soldier to be Emperor of Rome, and built an extraordinary palace here, where he retired on his abdication A.D. 303, and here spent the last ten years of his life. Years afterwards, when the neighbouring

towns were sacked by the Goths, Diocletian's palace became a sort of refuge or fort to which the beleaguered inhabitants retired, and the old town of Spalato was built within the walls of the palace entirely. I am glad to say much is being done to restore as far as possible the Centre Hall, and other parts: the Archæological Society of Vienna have undertaken the work, which is being very well done. The most curious thing in the place is the cathedral, which Diocletian built for his own tomb; it is full of Egyptian sphinxes, Greek marble columns, and other treasures he collected from all parts; it was turned in the fifth century into a church, so for fourteen centuries Christians have worshipped over the bones and at the shrine of the Emperor who boasted that he had annihilated the followers of Christ! We left Spalato at 9.30 a.m., and reached Sebenico at 1 p.m.—a fine bright day, but frosty air. A. and I walked to see the cathedral, which, though a small building, is very perfect; it was designed by a Byzantine architect, but finished at a much later period in the florid Gothic style. There are some fine circular windows and fluted capitals, and curved architraves, very like Rosslyn Chapel. We left Sebenico at 2.30 p.m., and steamed up the Dalmatian coast, through the islands which are all shapes and sizes, and of no end. I counted

twenty-two in sight at one time; and the captain of the ship told me there was a place where thirty-five islands could be seen from the same point. The water is quite deep around them (probably they are of volcanic origin, and the force of the current of the Adriatic shaves off their sides), so that the ship can pass within a stone's throw of the land, threading its way amongst these islets. We reached Zara at 7 p.m. and stopped there three hours, too dark to go on shore.

"*February 20th.*—We arrived at Pola at 8.30 a.m., and went to see the old Roman amphitheatre. It was built in about the last days of the Empire, and for size is larger than the one at Nîmes; it is nearly perfect in its outer walls, and shows the balustrade from which the awnings were drawn across the centre. There is also a fine Roman arched gateway built by Augustus Octavius. We left Pola at 10.30 a.m., and I finish this within sight of Trieste at 4 p.m., having had the most beautiful weather and enjoyable trip (especially the last three days) since we left Corfu. The Austrian Lloyd's boats are well managed, well catered, and comfortable, while the officers are most obliging to travellers.

"Believe me,

"Yours affectionately,

"H."

MONTENEGRO. II.

"VENICE, *March*, 1884.

"MY DEAR D.,

"English language cannot express the 'Dolce far niente' of reclining in a gondola upon the canals of Venice (I ignore the desecrating products of a Radical age in the shape of steam gondola-buses). Perhaps it is fittest to apply to the enjoyment of our laziness the epithet 'heavenly' (which Englishmen often use); for it, as nearly as possible, expresses the feelings of the human being who 'takes the air' without any muscular exertion of his own body after some weeks of hard travel, and after ordinary and extraordinary bothers, bumpings, and bad food. Venice is the place for the wearied traveller to recoup his energies. Nothing could have been rougher than our experiences in Northern Albania and Montenegro, but they were somewhat dramatic and most amusing.

"Let me draw you a picture!

"A small steam-launch, room for three people forward, the boiler amidships, and a seat for four persons aft. In this craft we seven souls started from Scutari to go up the lake to Rieka; the captain a German, the engineer a Savoyard, the helmsman a Turk, Austria, Ireland, Scotland, and England represented by the remaining four. All went well for half the way, when a 'lopping sea' (I hope this is the right term to use on a fresh-water lake) drove those forward aft, and made the engineer growl out that the water would swamp his boilers. So we went 'easy,' and headed towards the shore; having safely made a small creek, we waited for the weather to calm; some Montenegrins came down to interview us, when an altercation began between the captain, the Turk, and the natives as to the right way up the river at the top of the lake to Rieka.

"A gentleman we had met before, who was travelling in the country, happened to come to the landing-place and acted as interpreter for me. By his advice we engaged a Montenegrin to accompany us and steer us through the shallows and rocks up the river. We started again, the Turk still steering, the Montenegrin at the bows directing our course by signal to him. After

scraping the bottom frequently, and stopping the engine, going easy, then ahead, amid the audible grumbles of the Savoyard, we stuck bang on the top of a mud bank in the river. The captain, who had been imbibing something more potent than the contents of the lake, began at once to abuse the Montenegrin; but I had been watching their proceedings, and had seen the latter hold his hand out as a signal to the steersman to port his helm before we grounded, and the Turk had not answered. This decided me, and I practically put them all under arrest; ordered G. in his own language to tell the captain to keep quiet and to see he did so, assured the Montenegrin he might resume his place at the bows, and that I would go to the helm to see his directions obeyed.

"What determined me upon this course was the evident grievous discontent of the Savoyard, and the utter funk the Turk was in (he had been crouching telling his beads, when the water was a little raised, and his pluck had not returned).

"Upon these assurances, and after much shoving to clear the bank, we started again. I stood over the Turk and made him steer exactly as the Montenegrin directed, turning a deaf ear to his repeated expressions of devotion to myself and superior knowledge regarding the channel

of the river. A. sat below talking to the Savoyard, who was delighted with the turn of events, and fired up his boiler till the old steam-launch rattled along merrily, and we landed at Rieka, after safely circumventing the numberless twists and shoals in the river, without further mishap.

"Cettinje is a very interesting place, situated in a basin among the hills, with its green capped tower and huge bell, which is only rung on extraordinary occasions to summon the Montenegrins to defend their country. It is said that the bell can be heard an almost fabulous distance, and from what I have seen done by the human voice in these countries, I can believe almost any assertion regarding the travel of sound. There is a current story that the news of the defeat of the Russians at the Alma was known in a marvellously short time, even on the shores of the Adriatic, having been holloaed across from hill to hill of the Balkan peninsula by the shepherds.

"Our two days at Cettinje were delightful, with bright sun and frosty nights. While sitting sketching on the top of the pass overlooking the Lake of Scutari on the evening of the second day, watching the grand sunset illuminating endless snow-covered and cragged peaks, a young Highlander came up to us. I expressed our pleasure at the beautiful weather and scene; he

pointed to the sky, where feathery, rose-coloured, flaky clouds were rising in the north-east,and shook his head. I paid little attention at the time, but remembered his forebodings the next day when we had to leave the place in such a snowstorm!

"This country suffers in the early spring from these visitations, completely shutting it off from all communication except on foot or horse-back, and frequently the Princess of Montenegro has had to be carried on the shoulders of the hardy mountaineers, her subjects, when journeying from the capital.

"Snow or no snow, we had to start or else wait ten days for the next boat at Cattaro, during which time the storm might have got worse; A. and F. had a weary time of it, as they could not have walked without getting wet through, holding on to the sides of a sort of four-wheeled basket-carriage, tilted up first on one hand then on the other, at a very acute angle, while the horses struggled through the drifts over the pass.

"The influence the Prince has over his people is much marked in their civility and attention to strangers; comparing the hillmen with the tribes south of Scutari, under the rule of the Turk, the difference between the well and ill-governed is discernible at a glance. The former are bright, cheerful, contented, and

glad to see you, the latter surly and undemonstrative.

"The Miridites, Albanians, and other clans under the rule of Turkey, are kept in subjection by the power of the sword alone; the feuds and jealousies between the different tribes being rather encouraged than otherwise. The blood feuds in families are dreadful things; a man may grow up without knowing that it falls to him to take the life of another, because a parent or relative of his had fallen by that man's hand; the homicidal mission is given to him to perform in a certain time, and when executed, he knows from day to day he is the mark of some member of the rival family destined to be his murderer!

"You can see in most of the courtyard walls, which surround the houses in Scutari, holes left in the corners and by the entrance gate through which a bullet can be fired, and many a rival has been removed by a shot from his lurking assassin through one of these peep-holes.

"A strong ruler would soon put a stop to these lawless deeds, but the 'sick man' is far from being strong. Except in some few spots Northern Albania and Montenegro are less fertile countries than Southern Albania and Epirus; in physique the people are a splendid set, and certainly they manage to develop good specimens

of the human race upon the barren soil and scanty products of their country.

"There is a considerable sect of Roman Catholics in Northern Albania, and as they are quiet and law-abiding, they have obtained considerable power. A. and I called with Mrs. G. upon one of their leading families in Scutari; they lived in a fine old house (within a court-yard) built rather in the Dutch style, the rooms commodiously fitted with sofas round the sides, as usual in the East, and the open fire-hearths decorated with overhanging canopies of Italian work in plaster. The old lady, who was charmed to see us, had two sons, one of whom had only been married a few days, and the bride (according to custom) profusely covered with silks and jewels, waited on us all seated in the room, handing round to us lemonade, sherbet, coffee, and other Eastern concomitants to the evening meal which we call 'tea.'

"The sons were fine, intelligent young fellows, wearing European instead of the native dress, though the ladies adhered to the costume of the country; they all seemed pleased at our visiting them, and, indeed, even amongst the roughest tribes in the Balkan peninsula, I have experienced similar civility and hospitality whether at a house, a tent, or a shepherd's wigwam.

"There is very little sport to be got in Northern Albania; pheasants are to be found in some places, but for woodcock and wild fowl it is not so good as in the southern parts, or in Epirus.

"Yours always,

"H."

EASTERN NOTES.

WITHOUT pretending to lift the veil of mystery which still enshrouds the meeting of the Emperors at Skiernievice in September last, or to draw the political horoscope of Eastern Europe, I propose to record some ideas on the social and political questions of the day gathered during my travels in various parts of the East. I begin with Austria, destined to become, what her name implies, the Eastern Empire. No other country amalgamates so many different nations with separate rights and diets, parliamentary institutions, customs and creeds. Notwithstanding the many predictions that Austria must fall to pieces, she is now stronger and more consolidated than at any previous period of her history. The German portion of the Empire appears to have learnt, from the struggles with Prussia and Italy and the Hungarian Insurrection of 1848 – 49, the faculty of ruling judiciously. Under the

guidance of an excellent monarch and able ministers, she has during recent years advanced rapidly. There is less tendency to bureaucracy in the Austrian military and administrative systems, and more attention is paid to the wishes of the people and the development of the countries of which the Empire is composed. Europe's mandate to Austria in Bosnia and Herzegovina has proved fairly successful; and the incorporation at no distant date of these two territories within the Empire that now manages them may be expected. Shod with iron as the heel of Austria is, her hand has been gilded with bounty in making roads and railways and improving communication throughout her southern dominions and along the Dalmatian coast. But she has, in my humble opinion, spent needless sums in fortifications and military defences. It is said that the Hungarians are at heart opposed to Austria, and that they have never forgiven Russia for helping to crush them thirty-six years ago. I could, however, find no evidence of this feeling. Every one spoke well of the Emperor and his family, were interested in their own elections and Parliament, and were confident that the bitter memories of those dark days were dying out.

Throughout the rest of the Empire, apart from Hungary, the provinces are divided into

diets, seventeen in number, on which are represented all the churches, universities, landowners, towns, trade-guilds, and rural communes. These diets make laws relating to local administration, county taxation, agriculture, education, the Church, charitable institutions, and public works. The central diet, the Reichsrath, contains in the Upper House fifty-four hereditary nobles, some bishops, and certain life members nominated by the Emperor; while the Lower House contains 350 members elected for a term of six years, through the various provinces, by the direct vote of all citizens who are of age and possessed of a small property qualification. The great feature of this parliamentary system is that the provincial diets relieve the Upper and Lower Houses of all provincial work, while the advantage of allowing each district, different from the rest in many ways, to administer local affairs must be great, because it attracts and interests all classes concerned. The benefits of local government throughout Austria-Hungary generally become at once apparent to the traveller. The finances of the Empire are said to be a weak point; and the consolidated and floating debts are enormous. But there is honesty in the Government offices, and with the increasing prosperity of the Empire, her position in this department

should improve. The growth of her commerce is impeded by protection. The army seemed to be in first-rate condition, and well-equipped. I heard no hostile expressions used against her supposed rival in the East—Russia; but, at the same time, it struck me that if a quarrel arose Austria was fully prepared for the fight.

I saw nothing of Bohemia, but went down the Danube to Belgrade, the capital of Servia, with the Austrian guns frowning on it from the opposite side of the river. That the Empire wishes to annex Servia is a purely gratuitous hypothesis. It would be far better for her that Servia should become strong within herself and remain independent. Austria would oppose any Russian advance on Servia, and would probably readily guarantee to abstain from moving in that direction herself, especially if she thereby secured Bosnia and Herzegovina. Among the Slav races the Servians struck me as the least energetic, and the most sly. There was no "go" among them; no definite ideas or aims. Servia stands in great need of improved communication in the shape of roads and railways. These she cannot make without foreign assistance, and the advantage she would realise by their construction is inestimable. Her chief trade at present is in pigs, of which immense droves

roam over a land surely fitted for a superior stock and a better crop. Agricultural industry is at a low ebb; the laziness engendered by continual shepherding has a baneful effect upon the rural populace. Many fine tracts of land, suitable for the cultivation of the vine, of corn, and other products, remain neglected. These remarks apply to all the countries on the northern slopes of the Balkans. Of the Bulgarians I formed a high opinion. Those who framed the constitution for the principality of Bulgaria can have known little of, or were strangely indifferent to, the condition of the people themselves. It can only be attributed to the good qualities of the Bulgar that matters in the little country seem now to be settling down. Unquestionably the arrangement for Eastern Roumelia, as far as the government of the country went, was the best. The agitation, now on foot for amalgamating Eastern Roumelia with Bulgaria, is inevitable, since the suzerainty of the Sultan becomes every day more empty, and his authority more feeble. The same ideas and aspirations animate the people of the two districts. The one governed by the Prince of Battenberg was desired to run before it could walk; the other, which has been the more successful, was guaranteed honest administration, fair dealing, and full liberty to all sects and

creeds. But the Bulgars are pertinacious and painstaking, with decided views and ideas. Their desire to unite the various parts of Europe which their race inhabits into one kingdom will soon be attained, and I believe eventually they may take a leading position among the nations of Eastern Europe.

Passing by the route which no traveller should miss, down the Danube from Basiasch to Orsova, where the mighty river cleaves its passage and surges through the rocky Carpathians, one enters the kingdom of Roumania, the earliest formed among the independent principalities, and the most advanced people among the Slav races. It is said that many of the ancient Romans, after the Dacian campaigns, settled in Moldavia and Wallachia, and it may be that the people inherit from their Italian forefathers the vivacity and energy which characterise them. The country has much to thank King Charles for since his accession to the throne in 1866. He has shown not only administrative ability, but talents of a high order as an engineer. The towns of Bucharest, Ibraila, and Galatz have been much improved. The trade at the two last places has largely increased since the works at the Sulina mouth, which have been constructed at enormous cost under Sir Charles Hartley, have opened up and improved commu-

nication on the Danube. The army displayed good fighting qualities in the late war with Turkey, when it bore the brunt of the attacks on Plevna, and largely contributed to the success of its Russian allies.

From Roumania I passed on into Russia, the huge dimensions of whose empire permitted me only to visit Bessarabia, the provinces of Odessa, Podolia, Kieff, Kharkoff, Little Russia, the Crimea, Taganrog, and Rostoff, the Northern and Southern Caucasus, Tiflis, Georgia, down to the Asian frontier, and Batoum. In Russia proper, agriculture (wheat and corn-growing and cattle-grazing) is the main industry, badly developed and much neglected, except in Podolia, and in particular districts near Odessa, Nicolaief, Kharkoff, Taganrog, and some few spots favoured by the energy of enterprising proprietors. The Russian peasant is a most feeble farmer, without knowledge or enterprise. At the present price of wheat, and the competition with India and America, no country can be suffering more in this department than Russia. Notwithstanding their poverty, the Russian peasantry are a cheerful race, while the abolition of serfdom has done but little to diminish their obedience to their rulers and their priests. Drunkenness prevails unchecked and without even remonstrance.

Vodky (whisky) of the vilest sort is the staple drink, and the shops where it is sold are mostly in the hands of Jews, who take them at high rates from the Government, and retail abominable stuff to the peasantry. This fact, and the mortgaging of the land to the Jews, were at the bottom of the recent anti-Semitic riots and outrages. With the lower orders some hundreds of years behind those of other nations, Russia suffers from the want of a strong middle class. There is a disinclination among the upper orders to enter into trade, as marked and as deplorable as the failure of the Government to encourage commercial undertakings. The upper classes in Russia would compare favourably in point of education and general knowledge with their social equals elsewhere; but they entirely lack business habits, and have no idea of improving their country.

With the exception of Odessa and Tiflis, the towns in Southern Russia are wretched, and the annoyance the traveller experiences — at every town, village, or commune, he has to submit to police supervision, production of passports, countersigning of Government orders, and all the rest of precautionary measures which human ingenuity can devise—is extreme. Practically these precautions are useless, seeing that the Nihilist, if he travels, takes very good care that his passport is

correct. As regards Nihilism itself, I cannot think it is so widespread as foreigners seem to believe. Some few richer malcontents living out of their country, perhaps assisted by Socialists of other nationalities, are behind those whom they induce to imperil their lives by attempts at assassination. The mass of the reformers in Russia have nothing in common with these desperadoes, and know that every act of violence only serves to retard any forward movement. Yet, Nihilism notwithstanding, reform in Russia cannot be indefinitely delayed. Slow as may be the movement, it is certain that the Empire will eventually have to face great constitutional changes, and meet existing difficulties by drastic measures. Not the least pressing is the question of finance. The annual deficit, said to amount to over five millions sterling, grows instead of decreasing; the paper rouble is more and more depreciated; taxation on the necessaries of life is intolerably heavy; and there is a want of expansion in the finances and trade which argues a general rottenness.

The army of Russia is so large, is scattered over such an enormous area, and its parts differ so widely, that it is impossible to adequately describe it in the space at my command. The picked corps of infantry are first-rate, and the

cavalry generally are good. Some of the Cossacks are perhaps the best light cavalry in the world; but in artillery, arms, and equipments, no troops can be worse than the Russian. Some of the infantry regiments are disgraceful, and the majority have rifles of the oldest and clumsiest pattern. I saw a regiment at Batoum practising in squads at targets the size of a man at one hundred yards' distance, and the average of the hits was one out of thirty-seven shots! I was much struck with the different calibre of the regiments posted on the Galician, Austrian, and Asia Minor frontiers; in these districts the men were evidently old soldiers, of far superior physique to those in the interior, but still poorly armed and accoutred.

The position of Mahomedan and native races under Russian rule is very peculiar. The Tartars of the Crimea are a shrewd set, apparently reconciled to the Czar's rule. Their habits are thrifty, and they are industrious in the cultivation of tobacco and vines. The tribes in the Caucasus have not yet settled down; they are idle, lawless, and submit only to superior force. Their own petty jealousies, which their rulers know well how to use against them, prevent anything like combined action. The different tribes are over twenty in number: the Ossetyans, the largest, 60,000

strong, are partly Christian, partly Mahomedan; but creed goes for little here. You are told in the country never to let a stranger come nearer than ten yards to you without drawing your revolver, inquiring his business, and transacting it with him at that distance. Yet Russia manages to reign over these savages, as she will also reign over the wild Turcomans. I am not sure that her system of autocratic government is not the best in dealing with barbarous races, and that slight as is her civilising action, the first step towards civilisation, viz. the maintenance of order, which she enforces, is a great advantage, and one which, were we not blinded by dread and jealousy, we should rather support than disapprove of.

Russian possessions in Central Asia, so far from being a source of profit, are burdens. A generation will probably pass before she is strong enough to threaten India. There is one tribe on the shores of the Black Sea whose position must excite universal sympathy. The Lazes, who held Batoum and the surrounding district, were never conquered. They defeated the Russians on all occasions. Yet the Treaty of Berlin called upon them to surrender their land to their enemies. A hard-working race, they were devoted to their country, in which they were practically freemen, although acknowledging allegiance to the Sultan.

They were allowed a certain time to leave the country after its acquisition by Russia, and their unanimous emigration showed how distasteful to them was the new order of things. Batoum was by far the most important gain Russia made under the Treaty, as it is the only port on the Black Sea, with the exception of Sevastopol, that remains unfrozen throughout the winter, and was of extreme value for the development of the Caucasian and Caspian trade. If the aggressive war party in Russia would be content with the laurels they have won, and submit to the counsels of the peace party, there would be a brighter prospect for the country. Its mineral wealth is patent, but the difficulties placed in the way of developing the mines are insurmountable. Whether the Czar grants a constitution or not, the first step for the improvement of the country should be the strengthening and enlarging of the Supreme Council, and the delegation through it of larger powers to the governors than they now possess for carrying out works of reform in their respective provinces.

Three other points must be mentioned in connection with the people of Russia. Among the lower orders, religious bigotry is the most powerful agency; and when any movement is led by their priests, they follow blindly. The power

of the Church is enormous. Among the upper classes there is a most unreasoning dislike of Austria. Towards England the feeling is, if not one of friendship, at least of tolerance. This is a mystery, of which the solution apparently is that Austria is looked upon as a rival, while England is regarded as openly declaring her motives and honourably carrying out her policy, whatever it may be.

Of all the countries of the East, Turkey presents the greatest perplexities to the Western traveller, chiefly because Turkey in Asia differs from Turkey in Europe, while each is subdivided into the official and clerical portions. Of the population with their several creeds, I can only say that the Mahomedan people and lower orders will compare favourably as regards their industry, social relations, and general conduct with all the surrounding nations. Their religion, and the dread of being persecuted and prevented from attending its services, are the ties which hold them under submission to the Ottoman flag; if they could trust in the future bringing them religious liberty, their recognition of the Sultan's authority would be less devoted.

Between the Mahomedan lower orders and the Christian races very little ill-feeling exists, although the latter are not allowed to carry arms,

and are treated by the Turkish proprietors and officials with extreme harshness. As soldiers, sailors, and husbandmen, few people are superior to the Mahomedans of Turkey; all they require is a good leader; they are patient and abstemious, and not naturally cruel. As much may be said of the Christian inhabitants of the same regions. It is only when strife is stirred up and evil passions aroused that their deceit and barbarity display themselves. Having been under subjection so long, their good qualities have had no chance of development. They have been practically slaves, but the current of events during the last twenty years encourages them to hope that before long they will be better governed.

There are few intelligent Mussulmans who do not secretly or openly profess supreme disgust at the Sultan and abhorrence of his system of government. This is not surprising. The official Turkish world is as bad as it can be. The honest men are incapable administrators, and the men of ability are mostly knaves. The state of the army is disgraceful. No pay is given to the soldiers, and the system pursued is to contract for the commissariat of the troops at heavy rates, which are enforced almost at the point of the bayonet. The Turkish Government feed the soldiers well, but do not meet their obligations to the contractor.

The latter fixes a rate which is exorbitant in the hope of some day being paid, but, as it is exceedingly rare for these men to get their money, the result is ruin to the majority of them. In the administration of the provinces is a sadder story still. Extortion is rampant. The pashas and governors of the various districts are required to send a specified sum to Constantinople, and they get the money as best they may. Their method of collecting the sheep-tax is typical. Each owner of a flock is rated at so much a head, and the rate is nearly the full value of a sheep. Therefore, to secure the means of living, he keeps as many more than he pays for as he possibly can; a system of cheating which the Turks cap by perpetually raising the rate.

Nothing has been done, even though stipulated for under the Treaty of Berlin, towards improving the position of the Armenians in Asia Minor.*

* Since this paper was completed the *Pall Mall Gazette* has published an account of Turkish atrocities in Macedonia, and questions have been asked in Parliament on the subject. I believe that many brutal acts on the part of the Turks and their Bashi-Bazouks have been committed frequently, though in certain particulars they may be exaggerated. England and her co-signatories are of course under an imperative obligation to the Treaty of Berlin to prevent such horrors and misgovernment. Because we agreed not to grant administrative autonomy to Macedonia, our liability, both moral and legal, to

The race would be content to remain within the Turkish Empire if their liberties were guaranteed, and fair dealing and taxation were recognised principles. The result of the present condition of things will be to drive them into the arms of Russia, who will make Armenian grievances a pretext for advancing further southwards. Still Turkey has stronger claims to be the supreme power in Asia Minor than in Europe. Taking the Empire as a whole, few countries can compare with it in climate and productive qualities. Lovely scenery meets the traveller everywhere, but his safety is less assured within the dominion of Turkey than in any of the countries included in

protect the inhabitants of that country from cruelty and extortion was not extinguished. I understood Lord Granville in the House, in reply to the Duke of Argyll, to say, that although our consuls declared Macedonia to be in a better state, he could not give such a favourable report of Albania and other parts of Turkey. In the district of Yemen in Arabia a telegram says that the rebellion has increased, that the Porte has abandoned the attempt to collect the taxes, and that its authority in the province is merely nominal. Another telegram says that in order to quell a military insurrection at Monastir (one of the districts in which the Macedonian atrocities are said to have often occurred), the Turkish authorities gave the troops three months' arrears of pay, and for a time this has checked the agitation. Can anything more beyond these facts be needed to prove the disorganisation and scandal of the present government of Turkey?

this notice, with perhaps the exception of parts of the Caucasus. The towns are all picturesquely placed, but ill-kept. Constantinople, situated on a spot, and amid surroundings, as beautiful as any in the world, is the foulest den it has ever been my lot to explore. The most turbulent and independent of the Sultan's subjects are those of Northern Albania, divided among themselves by blood feuds very similar to those which existed in the Highlands of Scotland some centuries ago—people of martial type and feelings, quite capable of achieving their freedom if agreed on their "cause," and sooner or later likely to ally themselves with Montenegro.

I went up the Boyana River, the new frontier between Turkey and Montenegro, to Scutari, thence across the lake northwards to Rieka, and to Cettinje. It was a pleasure indeed to pass from a desert of tyranny into this oasis of freedom. Good roads, well-built houses, little patches of land ingeniously reclaimed from the rocky hills, a people absorbed in their pursuits—all this spoke of contentment, happiness, and good government. Montenegro is a model of what can be done, against every disadvantage in the way of soil, situation, climate, and communication, to improve a country. The little State had no seaboard or independent means of conveyance for goods and

merchandise before the late rectification of the frontiers gave her the Boyana. The personal interest of Russia in Montenegro is manifested on every occasion. Last spring I happened to travel with an envoy who had been sent specially from Meshed, and under orders of the Czar, to announce to the Prince the submission of the Turcomans of Merv. The envoy had travelled without intermission across country, *via* Constantinople, and the information he gave me anticipated by some days the announcement of the news in the London press. He was received by the Prince with much consideration at Rieka, and proved to be a well-known Panslavist agent and agitator, employed by the Albanian League in 1878–79 in inducing the tribes to rise. Since then he had visited Afghanistan, Merv (where he saw O'Donovan), and the Turcomans' country. Perceiving what manner of man my casual acquaintance was, beyond rendering him the slightest service of a lift on his road (which he amply repaid by engaging a pilot for us at the head of Scutari Lake), I associated no further with him. Yet a paragraph appeared in a Vienna newspaper, a few weeks later, announcing that my wife and I, "when travelling through Albania and Montenegro, had brought with us the notorious ——, the agitator! bearing a letter from

the Czar to the Prince, and now engaged in stirring up the Albanians and Slavs."

My first visit to Greece was in the winter of 1881 and spring of 1882, when the delimitation of the new frontier from the Gulf of Arta to Volo was going on, and the new elections took place. The country had been madly excited by the prospect of war. The King had made a tour through Europe in the hope of obtaining the sympathy and support of the Great Powers. M. Coumondouros was Prime Minister, but public feeling was against him, and there was great dislike to certain members of his Cabinet. The result of the election placed M. Tricoupis in power, and of all men that modern Greece has produced, he is perhaps the ablest, the most honest and far-seeing. It is largely due to his efforts that brigandage is abolished, and that the material prosperity of the kingdom as well as the social condition of her people have signally improved. Greece has had much to struggle against; the poorest end of the Continent, and none of the richest provinces, were given to her; her freedom attracted to Athens and elsewhere a host of adventurers and demireps from the Levant; and those who sought to govern her were often fortune-hunters rather than statesmen and patriots. The acquisition of the Ionian

Islands was a great help to her; and as regards these I would say, in passing, that although Corfu has felt the loss of the British occupation, I could find no evidence that the islands have become less prosperous since Greece took them over. The new territory given her under the Treaty of Berlin will also be of great advantage to the little kingdom. No one can fail to be impressed with a feeling of gratification at the signs of social advancement amongst the people. There are faults too patent to be ignored. The Greeks in their own land lack industrial activity, and are too fond of politics. There is a great future before Greece in the products of her vineyards—some of the best white wine I ever tasted came from near Athens—the soil generally is admirably suited to the cultivation of grapes and currants, and, following the successful lead of Italy, she should largely develop this industry. France is now importing quantities of red wine from Corfu and other parts of Greece, finding that it mixes well with her own vin ordinaire. The improvements in the port of the Piræus have been succeeded by a railway enterprise the object of which is to connect Athens with Thessaly. The inhabitants of Epirus would certainly be glad to join the kingdom of Greece. But the Greeks must exercise patience, and by continuing to im-

prove what they have got strengthen their claim to more.

Apart from the fact of Hellenic independence, the statesmen of Germany, Austria, and Russia perceive that the existing Turkish Empire is doomed, that the movement of the races, becoming every day more powerful within and upon her borders, must eventually upset the Ottoman Government. The Triple Alliance is understood only to provide that the third Power should oppose any outside Power which might interfere, in the event of the other two Powers included in the alliance falling out between themselves. What is certain is that the aim of Germany is to preserve peace, and that if, notwithstanding her efforts, war did ensue between Russia and Austria, she would abstain from interference unless the contest spread. The completion of the railways through Austria, Servia, and Turkey, to Salonica and Constantinople, is of the greatest consequence to German interests and traders, and forms a central feature in the policy of Prince Bismarck. What is the position of England in Eastern Europe? The English name stands higher throughout the East than that of any other nation. In Albania, Epirus, Bulgaria, on the Danube, in the Crimea, in Lazistan, throughout the Caucasus, and in Armenia, the people trust

an Englishman's word, and the name of his country is a power. Apart from sentiment, what interest have we? Our merchants hold the chief share of trade through the Bosphorus, up the Danube to Braila and Galatz, and with the Black Sea and Sea of Azov ports. This trade would be endangered if a hostile Power held Constantinople and the Dardanelles, or if a strong fleet loomed on our north-eastern flank and threatened our Indian trade and communications.

Our first and paramount object must be to reinforce and support our Indian Empire. In view of this necessity it is difficult to understand why Cyprus was annexed, unless for the purpose of checkmating a possible design of Russia's towards the Mediterranean at the Bay of Scanderoon. There can at least be little doubt that an island in the Archipelago, either Milo or Mitylene, would be better adapted for the maintenance of British interests. Those who rule the destinies of this Empire should remember that, by stopping the natural advance of Russia southwards on her western side, they encourage her approach towards our own East. I have heard the selfish view argued and the opinion expressed that British policy should foment the animosities among the other Powers interested in these questions. We certainly cannot ignore the fact

that the Turk is feeling the pressure of the Mahdi. The rising of the Pretender is sufficient to show the weakness of the Ottoman power. If we recognise this growing debility it is a hopeless task to endeavour to maintain that power; it would be wiser in my opinion, to pursue a policy, which, while upholding our own interests, would aid in placing the countries immediately concerned in a better position socially, commercially, and politically.

England's mission in the countries at which I have now glanced is that of mediator. If the crying demands of the oppressed nationalities cannot be met, if the chaos in which their internal administration is carried on cannot be turned into order, if their civil and religious liberty cannot be granted, and if some of the fairest portions of God's earth now neglected cannot be given the blessing of a settled Government without resort to the cruel arbitrament of war, statesmanship will be discredited, history ignored, and Europe disgraced. The interests of France and Italy tend in the same direction. Their object is commerce, freedom, and civilisation. Will war assist us? Will a struggle between Austria and Russia, or the decimation of the Turks, or the conflict of creeds and tribes, further this object? These neutral Powers,

if I may so designate them, although they fought bitterly and bravely thirty years ago in support of the Turkish power, cannot defend it in future. They have no territorial interests of their own to guard, they have no mixed races and creeds within their borders whose views they must consider. Their policy should be changed from that of suppressing Russia and bolstering up Turkey, to one which would further the interests of humanity by giving a wise, just, and permanent Government to the countries from the Adriatic to the Bosphorus, and to Asia Minor. If a suitable pension were provided for the Sultan and his family, he might be induced to quit Constantinople and select a residence somewhere in the south. If Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia were united, if Greece received Epirus and Southern Albania, and Montenegro had Northern Albania, there would still remain a large part of Turkish Roumelia to be added to Asia Minor under a new Government. The army should be abolished, and a gendarmerie formed, commanded chiefly at first by foreign officers, for the maintenance of order throughout the country. Civil and religious liberty to all races and creeds, whether Armenians, Mahomedans, Slavs, or Greeks, should be guaranteed by the Powers.

Theoretically this is simple enough; but

how and under what form of Government is practical effect to be given to these reforms? Whether delegates or members should be elected in each district to form a legislative body, and a supreme council, to which official members could be appointed by the guaranteeing Powers, and a governor over all nominated by them, in a somewhat similar position to our Viceroy of India, or whether a patriot prince could be found strong and able enough to rule as king, are points difficult and doubtful. But whatever that form of Government might be, the appointment of honest district judges and governors is of the first importance. Whatever lines the supreme power may be cast upon, the face of the country and the condition of the people can only be improved by better local and judicial administration. Salonica, the Dardanelles, and the Bosphorus, Trebizonde, Smyrna, and other ports should be made free to all nations, and railways through Bosnia, Herzegovina, Servia, Bulgaria, and Roumelia, be connected with the European ports. Unquestionably behind the disagreement between the Porte and Baron Hirsch about the Eastern railways there is pressure from other parties which may assume serious proportions. Austria is said by more than one well-informed correspondent, to have insisted

upon Turkey fulfilling her obligations concerning the Balkan railway, upon which the advisers of the Sultan retaliated by contending that the Baron, as an Austrian subject, had no right to form a foreign company, and threatened to sequestrate the railway and the junction works. Baron Hirsch claims many millions of francs from the Porte, and he protested against the sequestration of the railway, which protest the Austrian Embassy received instructions to support. It has been also rumoured that Osman Pasha, Minister of War, had been ordered to seize the whole line, and that the manager had made preparations for removing the books, papers, and money belonging to the company. The latest report is that the Sultan had personally interfered, and ordered the Porte to desist from the contemplated seizure, to examine the railway question once more, and to do nothing in the matter without reporting beforehand to him. There is every indication that great importance is attached to the question, and that a determined policy has been decided upon by Austria, with a view to settle it. The important declarations made recently by Count Kalnoky before the Foreign Affairs Committees reveal the anxiety with which matters are regarded by him. He dwelt upon the advantages of consolidating the friendly relations

of the Austrian Empire with Russia, and of the unanimous desire of the three Emperors and their Governments to maintain peace. The "alliance" with Germany was established on the firmest basis, and the "good relations" with Russia had been "strengthened by a general understanding." He said that one object in view was the consideration of the Balkan States in the interest of Austria and the States themselves; nor did he speak with uncertain sound when he described the conduct of the Porte about the railways as unjustifiable, and when he declared the state of affairs in Albania as unsatisfactory. This is strong language, which might even be taken to hint at an agreement between the three Empires for the partition of Turkey; but undoubtedly it means a resolution not to permit a much longer continuance of matters in their present condition. Would it not be the best to settle them by taking up at once the main question, the future of the Ottoman Empire, and by agreement among the Powers to decide this?

The local administration of the southern Austrian provinces proves that, under proper guidance, the people can be orderly, contented, and prosperous, although professing opposite creeds. The leaders of Europe are men of advanced years, deeply absorbed in pressing

questions elsewhere. The majority of Englishmen know little and care less about the political storms agitating the East, but there are signs of a wider knowledge being demanded of our leaders. Lord Salisbury was not happy, as one of the negotiators of the Berlin Treaty, in saying recently at Glasgow that "the Montenegrins are a people whose fate matters as much to us as that of the people of Mongul Tartary." The Prime Minister was taken to task some years ago for hinting that any further advance on the part of the Empire in the East might elicit the cry of "Hands off, Austria!" But far more dangerous and uncalled-for were Lord Salisbury's cynical references the other day to "the virtuous Government of Russia;" to "their correspondence marked by the highest moral character;" and the eventuality when "circumstances will be too strong for them." There is nothing noble in this language, and there is an absence of knowledge in the similes and of the subject. But another consideration should be present in our minds; we ought not to be blind to the watchful attitude of the Mahomedans when we remember the connection we have with them in Egypt and India. They are almost desperate; eager to turn in any direction—to follow any leader or Mahdi, on the chance of improving their position. Occasional

defeats do not crush them, and are only temporary checks. The evil at the foundation can only be obliterated by improving their government, a step which no one can deny would favourably affect the position of England elsewhere.*

Two years nearly have passed, and many storms have ruffled the political surface of Eastern Europe. The Emperors have met and exchanged vows of eternal friendship, and their chancellors busy themselves to make everything smoother all round for their masters and themselves. Eastern Roumelia revolted, and diplomacy proceeded to patch the Treaty of Berlin in order to join it with Bulgaria; whereupon Servia went to war and Greece armed; the former State failed and proved the fighting powers of the Bulgars, raising to a considerable reputation the military genius of Prince Alexander, the hero of Slivnitza; the latter kingdom spent a lot of money under the guidance of a mad Prime Minister, Delyannis, and eventually was brought to her senses and her ports blockaded by the Great Powers. The Czar has declared he no longer recognises Batoum as a free port, and Lord Rosebery on behalf of

* Reprinted from the *Fortnightly Review*, Dec., 1884.

England has protested, receiving a reply that the Treaty of Berlin had already been broken ; then, when every one was flattering himself that as things were going so well and serenely there must be some excellent steersman at the helm, Prince Alexander is forcibly kidnapped and extradited from Bulgaria, returns amid the ovations of the people, telegraphs submissively to the Czar, gets a snub in reply, and thereupon abdicates. The Emperors understand each other extremely well, and Russia has gained her point. The Continental Press hailed Lord Salisbury's accession as Foreign Minister in 1885, praised Lord Rosebery in 1886 for following on the lines he had laid down, declaring that at last a change of ministry in England had not broken the continuity of our foreign policy. The same Press, when in last July the Bulgarian crisis disturbed the peaceful aspect of affairs—though the Tories were in office, with Lord Iddesleigh as Foreign Minister following a similar policy to his predecessors—went into ecstasies of joy at the discomfiture of England, and of the interests we had defended ! Happy Mr. Gladstone ! If the late Prime Minister had been in office what wrath would not have descended on his head and shoulders through the thunderbolts of nine-tenths of the London Press in condemnation of himself personally, and of his

policy! It is all right in the eyes of those who write on foreign politics in the English Press, as long as Lord Salisbury and not Mr. Gladstone is in power, to keep us on good terms with Berlin. No praise was great enough for the admirable way we were getting on; at last we had a foreign policy worthy of the name; our relations were so cordial! Alas! at a moment's notice we are hopelessly "chucked." Beyond some mild protests that if Berlin and Vienna are indifferent, Bulgaria does not concern England, the critics in the Press are dumb dogs all! We may do the dirty work of Europe in leading the blockade of Greece, but the Triple Alliance will cut and carve the Balkan peninsula, without considering us, or the Treaty of Berlin. This may be very distressing to our pride, but we should be content, for it all means peace; each Emperor gets what he wants, and there is peace!

Does this blessing vouchsafed to Europe, rest upon a sure foundation? Or is it likely for long to continue?

Authorities on the Continent shake their heads doubting the peaceful result of the Triple Alliance. Where will the present policy of "laissez faire" end? Is the Balkan peninsula divided by arrangement between Austria and Russia?

The crowned heads and diplomatists met at

Gastein with gloomy forebodings; they separated with cheerfulness. Not a Pomeranian grenadier was to be sacrificed, only "the Battenberger" must go to appease the Czar; and the *mot d'ordre* went forth to the semi-official Press to pitch into England and English policy.

The following letter was written on the day after the news reached London of Prince Alexander's deposition.

To the Editor of "The Times."

SIR,

Returning from the Continent, where every one was talking of the critical situation of affairs, and the certainty almost that Russia was intent upon a "raid" on Bulgaria, I was relieved to find no reference in the Queen's Speech last Thursday to foreign affairs, and to hear the Prime Minister say that he "did not think there was any cause for perplexity in the East of Europe."

The expected blow has fallen. Prince Alexander is deposed, and the Bulgars are praying for Russian protection.

The Berlin *Post* hastens to argue upon these events as a blow to England, because the Prince "had made himself the representative of English interests," and then significantly adds, "in the hope that the Eastern question might be solved by an Austro-Russian conflict, without sacrifice of English blood and money."

The old game again! England is to be hailed as the greatest of nations if she will but decide to spend blood and money in thwarting, and if necessary, fighting Russia.

But, sir, whatever opinions may be held regarding the interest of England in the Eastern question, there is one lesson to be learnt from the present crisis. Diplomatic dealing with Turkey in its present condition is impossible; we cannot be sure that the policy adopted by the Sultan on one

day will be maintained and continued by him and his Ministers during the next twenty-four hours. While Sir William White was at Constantinople the policy of the Western States so influenced the Sultan as to induce him to favour their advice regarding the junction of Eastern Roumelia with Bulgaria; but since the change of our ambassadors at the Porte, M. de Nelidoff's power became ascendant, and gradually the policy which Germany, Austria, Italy, and England recommended to Turkey has been undermined and overruled. Meanwhile, Russian agents and roubles have been hard at work in Bulgaria. The *coup d'état* succeeds. Turkey is humbugged and outwitted; the Bulgars and Roumeliots are assured "that the great Czar will not leave their country without his powerful protection;" instead of securing Bulgaria as an independent State under the suzerainty of the Porte as a buffer against Russia (which was, I take it, the object of Lord Beaconsfield, Mr. Gladstone, and most European statesmen), that country becomes practically a Russian province.

Is (in Lord Salisbury's words) "the integrity of the Turkish Empire as defined by treaties of great importance to the interests of this country?" If so, it behoves us to know how that Empire stands.

Unusual forces of Russian troops are being concentrated at three points—in Southern Poland (where manœuvres on a large scale, to which no foreign officers are to be invited, take place next month), in Bessarabia, and in Asia Minor, opposite Erzeroum, where separate *corps d'armée* are being formed.

Are we to read of a march across the Danube, with a large force prepared to oppose Austria if she interferes, or of a dash into Armenia?

Without being an alarmist, it is desirable to know where the integrity of the Turkish Empire begins and ends as regards the interests of England.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

HUNTLY.

Reform Club, Pall Mall, S.W., August 23.

The Power that has pursued a distinct aim and a definite policy, never turning to the right or left, undismayed by defeat in the field of battle or diplomacy, is successful. Whatever *we may say*, Russia intends to be predominant in Bulgaria. England, *they say*, will only "sit on the rail, and protest." Rumour has it that Sir William White has been appointed British Ambassador at Constantinople, and assuredly no better representative of this country could be found.

The Queen's Speech at the prorogation of Parliament says: "In answer to a communication addressed by the Porte to the Signatory Powers, parties to that Treaty (Berlin), I have stated that so far as this country is concerned, there will be no infraction of the conditions guaranteed by treaties to Bulgaria. Assurances to the same effect have been given by *other Powers*." By other, but presumably not by *all* the other Powers!

We shall not break the treaties; but we cannot say that they are not already torn to shreds! General Kaulbars has his instructions: if the Bulgars object, or disobey, will Turkey, supported by us, rise in opposition to the will of Russia? Lord Salisbury's words are important and significant.

If they mean anything, they mean that our

interests are endangered, if and when these treaties are broken. General Kaulbars has demanded that the state of siege in Bulgaria should be raised, the parties implicated in the *coup d'état* released, and the elections to the great Sobranje postponed. Russian agents everywhere in the Press are denouncing the Bulgarian Regents as having been illegally nominated, as being Nihilists of old, but chiefly because they are opposed to the wishes of the Czar. What a proof of the power and influence of Russia is this mission of Kaulbars, especially after the loudly-expressed devotion of the Bulgarian army, and the majority of the nation to Prince Alexander!

Bulgaria is under the suzerainty of the Sultan, guaranteed by the signatories to the Treaty of Berlin. Is not the open expression of the Czar's "desire" and of Russian authority over Bulgaria, an infringement of the Berlin Treaty, and a blow at the integrity of the Turkish Empire? Have the important (?) British interests concerned in this integrity been involved or affected? Let us face the position and acknowledge our defeat through the want of support of our supposed allies and sympathisers; but let us be determined not to be humbugged in future.

If there is any foundation for the rumour

that when Russia gets possession of Bulgaria and Constantinople, Austria is to be gratified by the permanent annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a further extension of territory southwards and the port of Salonica, we should not allow ourselves to be taken unawares. Whatever division of the Balkan peninsula might be determined upon by the two Empires, backed by the third, it is out of the question to imagine that England would fight to prevent their schemes. The eventuality that such a division may take place, must be present to the minds of our statesmen and diplomatists. Austria is too honest to propose such a course; but she may be driven as an alternative to accept it with a fair share of the spoil, in order to maintain her position alongside her powerful neighbour. The Russian intrigues in Servia have weakened Austrian influence in that country; King Milan's throne is reported in a tottering condition; the Queen and the Prime Minister favour a pro-Russian policy which is fostered by Panslavic agitation. The idea of forming an alliance between the Balkan States, with or without Greece, and backed by Turkey, is propounded in several quarters; Balkanic unity is the latest product of diplomatic schemes: too late! The patchwork involved in the formation of such

union, would be rent before the iron will and determination of Russia, and the purpose of such a Power pursuing its aim by every scheme and shift imaginable! The will and the power always gain in the end; a policy which you will not fight in support of, is not worthy of the name. Let us make up our minds, before it is too late, on a definite and distinct policy.

Madame Novikoff, with the keen advocacy of a partisan, can see nothing alarming in the advance of Russia. She says: "Russia has often been at war with the Turks; but if you look on the map, you will see how little territory we have taken from them this century. Both Austria and England, the friends of the Porte, have taken more of its possessions than we, its hereditary foes." To admit this argument, one must indeed be blind. The Crimea, Sukkum Kalé with Circassia, Batoum and Lazistan, with Bessarabia, are no small additions to an Empire round the Black Sea coast, without including other annexations in Asia Minor. We must not approach this subject, feeling a sentimental liability regarding a past policy, and the sacrifices we have made to maintain it; nor should we be imbued with predilections in favour of Slavs, Turks, or Greeks. Acting as mediator, England can do much; but a combatant position

few believe this country is prepared to assume among them.

Of the three races named above, the Slavs are most difficult to deal with; across the peninsula from Montenegro on one side to Roumelia on the other, a ceaseless intrigue is pertinaciously carried on by agents among them promoting the national idea of Panslavism; it cannot come yet, it may come; meanwhile a restlessness is produced by agitation, both open and secret, which is subversive of, and fatal to, the good and peaceable government of the countries concerned.

The Turks as a potent force in Europe are gradually becoming weaker, their spirits are broken; they know intuitively that if the Central European Powers advance on the Balkans, England will not spend blood and treasure in fighting for them. They may have one despairing struggle, but they recognise defeat beforehand. The Mahomedans elsewhere in Arabia, Egypt, and other parts of Africa, care little for the Turk or the Sultan's authority. In India it is doubtful if the majority of our subjects holding that creed take any interest in, or notice of, events at Stamboul; it would be the same thing to them if the Sultan resided at Braussa, or Mecca. But the situation is different in Asia Minor: English interests are certainly more complicated in

Anatolia than in Roumelia; the Euphrates valley and the shores of the Mediterranean in the hands of a hostile Power are contingencies relating to our Indian Empire which must be considered and faced by our statesmen; he would be a bold man who would say that England should calmly look on at the establishment of Russian authority over Asia Minor, the finest recruiting ground any Power could have in the East.

I admit that the wholesale condemnation I expressed of "the Turkish official world," two years ago, was overdrawn, and I admit that the present Sultan has honestly endeavoured to improve the administration of the Empire. His Imperial Majesty is, however, too timid; he expresses the greatest disinclination to fight, and the Turk is useless as an ally except for warlike purposes. He is desirous of following our policy as long as he thinks we can back him up. Experience has taught him that we go the length of advice only; in despair he acknowledges the inexorable "kismet," and shuffles along, waiting for the crash, sending circular letters and protests from the Porte to the Powers of Europe. I admit also that the retirement and pensioning of the Sultan cannot in the existing state of politics and affairs in the East be brought about; if his Imperial priest-

hood could be recognised and his suzerainty retained, with an elective power from the people supporting a Governor at Constantinople, the "buffer policy" might have some chance; it has none now. England's energies and diplomacy are wasted in supporting or creating buffers without backers!

Several clever articles have appeared from time to time in a weekly London periodical, showing conclusively that the argument against the Turk retaining Constantinople is the strongest in his favour, because being weak he is the fittest to be the custodian of so important a position. There is much to be said for this Palmerstonian theory, and except the danger it may lead us into, probably no better hand-to-mouth policy can be found. Could we not make up our minds clearly as to what are British interests, and where they would be seriously affected?

If "the integrity of Turkey as defined by treaties is of the greatest importance to the interests of England," we should recognise our liabilities so as to be ready to meet them. There is nothing to show that the non-intervention platform, which is supposed to be engrained in the Radical creed, would be carried by the Democratic classes in the United Kingdom to

the extent of not protecting real British interests if endangered. Rather the reverse; for the anxiety shown as to the condition of our navy, and the desire expressed that England should maintain a preponderating position at sea, come as much from one political section as from all parties in the State.

The largest share of the maritime commerce through the Dardanelles is at present carried on under the English flag. Presuming that this trade is of importance to us, we first should take care that we had a powerful and sufficient fleet to protect it; and secondly, that whatever arrangements were entered into by the great Powers, the neutrality of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus should be assured. If we made up our minds to this, it would be odd indeed if we could not insist upon and maintain our point.

England had better retire from the European concert, absolve herself from *all* liabilities, and carry out the true spirit of non-intervention by minding her own business, but always with the proviso and upon the understanding that if that business is attacked we should defend ourselves. Nothing can be more deleterious to the nation, individually and collectively, than being mixed up in treaties and declarations which we support

by despatches, but which are broken by our allies and tacitly by ourselves; and then we bark without biting.

I cannot see the practical value of such a despatch as Lord Rosebery's about Batoum; perhaps this may arise from my conviction from personal examination that a free port could not remain free which only benefited a parcel of houses or a few acres of land, where the duties levied at the cordon round this strip, and on leaving the port, were so heavy and irksome as to be, though quite legal, equally impossible. Still, the action of the Czar towards the other Powers in declaring the agreement void was deserving of censure. It wanted manners, that great fault in education which the extra penny is supposed to provide, but seldom does. The only excuse to be made for the Czar is that there are three ways of doing things—a right way, a wrong way, and a Russian way!

What a "coup" England might have made, presuming that our Foreign Office had been properly posted and advised, as it should have been, if our Government had sounded Russia suggesting an arrangement for obviating the difficulties of the free port. We are always the day behind the fair.

Another Russian way of dealing in Eastern

matters, which, unfortunately, must be mentioned, is the common belief that bribery of Turkish officials frequently occurs when all other expedients fail in attaining the end in view. It was the current talk at Gastein, Vienna, and Berlin, that the delay in settling the Eastern Roumelian question was caused by roubles acting powerfully on the cupidity and actions of the representatives of the Porte. Here is what one of the best informed correspondents telegraphed from Vienna to London:

> Since the news of the Bulgarian Revolution reached Constantinople, M. Nelidoff and Said Pasha have been in frequent conference. Gadban Effendi, whose constant reports to Constantinople were to the effect, "All is well in Bulgaria and Roumelia," is suspected of having been won over by Russia. Madjid Pasha, and also Effendi, whose arrival in Roumelia gave the signal to the revolutionary movement, are only accused of blindness to the situation.

What a very odd conjunction of circumstances! If gossip is a lying jade, Russians and Turks are much maligned.

The Greeks (of the three races named above) appear for the moment to be out of the running. They acted impulsively last spring, forgetting that discretion is the better part of valour. Their humiliation has been galling to them in many ways. The sympathy of most people, and the

friendly feelings of all the Powers are with them; yet sympathy is of little practical value without active aid in some shape. To prevent her running her head against a brick wall, Europe had to put a strait-waistcoat on poor Greece. Let us hope her national claims and aspirations will not be forgotten when the scramble in the East takes place. My advice, or rather suggestion, to Greece would be to offer to lease Epirus and part of Macedonia from the Porte, guaranteeing the fixed income to be paid by each district, and acknowledging the suzerainty of the Sultan. Is this an impossible solution for diplomacy to achieve?

The jottings in these papers and letters, disjointed and cursory as they are, do not pretend to be more than the reflections of an interested traveller who has no pretensions to speak with authority.

There is a strange controlling Power in European politics which overawes the policy many would adopt, and influences others.

The Emperor of Germany and Prince Bismarck live in dread of another conflict with France; not that they doubt the power of the Empire to hold its own, but from their experience of the disasters of war. They hope to avoid for themselves, and to prevent their neighbours from adopting, the arbitrament of the sword. Dreading the turbulence of France, and the prospect of the

Republic's alliance with Russia, any move which pleases either is played.

Great Britain was let into the hole over Egypt, and our "sore" with France there is industriously worked against us.

We thought we were following a joint policy in Bulgaria with Austria, the firm ally of Germany; but the game is thrown up at the order of Russia, and England is laughed at.

It is most amusing to read the controversies carried on in the semi-official Press in Germany, Austro-Hungary, and Russia, conveying warnings to one or other of the Imperial allies amid sarcastic remarks regarding Great Britain. The personal opinions of certain statesmen too frequently predominate in these articles which, to be of value, should come from independent sources: to show, however, that all is not so serene as could be wished at Berlin, it is worth quoting from the *Vienna New Free Press* of a few days ago, as follows:

If Germany's attitude in the Eastern question be explained by a reference to the possibility of a Russo-French alliance, then the argument is lame. If such danger exist, then it was a mistake to take Russia into the Austro-German alliance. The fact that Russia's power is increasing ever more and more in the East does not make the danger less, but greater; and the relation between Germany and Austria-Hungary is in danger of suffering by it. If the Berlin Cabinet dread a Russo-French alliance it must render the relation with Austria-

Hungary more intimate, and must attract Italy and England to itself. The apprehension that Italy and England are not to be taken into account in arranging a great alliance does not serve to eliminate them from the list of the Great Powers. Prince Bismarck's diplomatic skill may patch the rent in the *entente* of the Imperial Powers; but the day is not far distant on which Berlin will have to choose between Austria-Hungary and Russia.

Nous verrons!

I now pass on to the declaration announced by me in 1868, when I first had an opportunity of speaking on the question. I pronounced my own private opinion that, should changes have to be made in the East, our interests would require that the nations living there should develop themselves into independent States corresponding to their individualities. In agreement with our Foreign Office, I am of opinion that to-day also such a policy responds best to the interests of the Monarchy, and that the latter, rejecting all desires of aggrandisement or conquest, must concentrate its whole endeavours and all its influence with a view to promote the independent development of those States, and to prevent the establishment of a protectorate not provided by treaties or the permanent influence of any single foreign Power there.

The Government, moreover, abides by its repeatedly expressed opinion that by existing treaties no other Power has the right to interfere in the Balkan peninsula single-handed with armed force or to establish a protectorate, in case of Turkey not availing herself of the right accorded her. The Government in general maintains that any modification in the conditions of the Balkan countries, in so far as they relate to the right of States or their proportions of power, cannot be made, except with the assent of the Signatory Powers of the Berlin Treaty.

Since the above words were spoken by M. Tisza in the Hungarian Parliament on September 30th, events have occurred which show at least that the decided opinion expressed by the Hungarian Prime Minister is giving way before some occult influence, and to use a homely expression, the courage of the statesmen of Austria-Hungary is "oozing out of the heels of their boots."

Is this caused by German pressure on Austria, controlling the more ardent feelings of Hungary?

We have seen the dictatorial mission of General Kaulbars to Bulgaria, his protests against the elections to the great Sobranje, M. Necklindoff's protests to M. Nacevics against alleged ill-treatment of Russians or Russian partisans in Bulgaria, and now we hear of Gadban Effendi's delegation from the Sultan to back up Russia's objections. It would be interesting to know whether the Foreign Office of the dual kingdom is concentrating "its whole endeavours and all its influence," with a view to promote the independence of Bulgaria, or whether a superior Power has not influenced it to such an extent as will allow it tacitly to submit "to the establishment of a protectorate," not provided for by treaties, and the permanent influence of Russia over Bulgaria?

Sufficiently startling was Kaulbars' career. The General, it must be remembered, is intimately acquainted with the position of Austria-Hungary from his residence as a diplomat in these countries. On September 29th, starting in his circular to the Russian Consuls in Bulgaria with this: "The time for mere words is at an end!" he made demands which only a sovereign Power should, or had a right to make, unless to a feudatory State. The Bulgarian Government of the Regency stood firm, and replied respectfully to the Russian agent, but did not yield to his demands.

Defeated in a policy of bluster, the General commenced a tour through Bulgaria, addressing deputations, and intriguing with the friends of Russia, landing finally at Rustchuk, where he is supposed to be informing the Czar of the condition of Bulgaria. He will probably return to Sofia, deliver an ultimatum to the Government not to convoke the Sobranje, and then break off relations with them.

Meanwhile M. Necklindoff is not idle at Sofia, hurling accusations against the Government of the Regency of dreadful crimes committed by the "representatives of public order"; and after calling upon the Government to be energetic, he says, "on you and on those governing the country will fall the whole responsibility for the

consequences which might be brought about by the continuance of this state of things."

Even if the charge were not clearly "trumped up," the threats implied are quite inconsistent with the proper legal position of Russia towards Bulgaria, and as one of the co-signatories to the Treaty of Berlin.

Russia has either determined to provoke a quarrel and occupy Bulgaria at all hazards, or she is trying to obtain a pretext for such occupation which will satisfy the easy-going conscience of the "honest broker" of Berlin, being assured beforehand of, in that case, Germany's neutrality and of the acquiescence of Turkey. Gadban's mission almost premises the latter; he is a notorious Russophile, with a doubtful character for integrity. The Sultan would hardly have sent him, unless Russian influence were again predominant at the Porte. Already the Vienna and Buda-Pesth papers are asking "what is the consequent outlook for the Hapsburg Empire?"

It is supposed that Germany's support of Russia has so terrified the Sultan that he has been induced to throw himself into the Czar's arms. Will it be left to Russia and Turkey to settle the Eastern question between themselves?

The suggestion sounds strange, but the task is not so impossible or improbable as that of

mixing oil and vinegar. What may be considered as certain is that the Regency government in Bulgaria will not be able to stand its ground, and remain in power under the several and varied pressures Russia brings to bear upon it, and the hostility of the Porte. Without the support of Turkey as the Suzerain Power, one stone of the foundation goes; without the promise of active support, with only the benevolent advice of those Powers who advocate the "buffer" policy, another stone is gone; the postponement of the convocation of the Sobranje at the order of Russia will place Bulgaria in the power of that Empire; their authority undermined and sapped, their country bullied and deserted, the Regents may be compelled to yield; it is naturally asked, why does not Russia propose a candidate for the Bulgarian throne? The humiliation of the Bulgar is not complete; until Russian influence is again the most potent and recognised force in Bulgaria, the Czar's game is to delay matters, to postpone the choice of a ruler, and not to make any suggestion on the subject.

For the same reasons it is not probable that Russia will precipitate matters to a crisis; her present policy, all round, will be to cajole Turkey, to kill every spark of independence

in Bulgaria, to hoodwink Austria-Hungary, and by general obstructions to turn everything into an impossibility, until her occupation of the Balkans becomes inevitable. How hollow sounds Lord Randolph Churchill's boast at Dartford, that Lord Beaconsfield's policy in 1878 "had rescued the young liberties of the peoples in the Balkan peninsula, who, having been saved from the frying-pan of Turkish misrule, are in danger of falling into the fire of Russian autocracy"! Big words; but are they to be followed by big deeds? The cold reception, and even bitter criticism accorded to this speech by the *Vienna and Buda-Pesth Press* are evidences of the disappointment felt in those countries at "the decline of England's policy and power" (?) which must be especially galling after the enthusiastic outburst, and prophecies of spirited co-operation with which they hailed the accession of the Tory Ministry to power in England.

One cannot be astonished at the belief on the Continent in the feebleness of Great Britain when the leader of the House of Commons declares that the foreign policy of the Government is "subject always to the cardinal necessity of maintaining the union of the Unionist party at home!"

And what severer comment on the policy of

nine years ago can be made, than in the words of the *Morning Post* of October 2nd: "We cannot sail our ships over the Balkans, and it is only just to expect that some other policeman should keep the peace in that district: we therefore look to Germany!"

The Chancellor of the Exchequer looks elsewhere, and quoting Lord Salisbury's declaration at Manchester in 1878, "the Austrian sentinel is on the ramparts," he added, "The liberty-giving policy of the Treaty of Berlin will, *without doubt*, be carefully and watchfully protected!" The sentinel has already given the alarm! Is the guard turning out? Are the troops hurrying to arms to defend these sacred ramparts which Lord Beaconsfield is supposed to have erected?

We should turn to consider what is to be the policy of England in the East of Europe in the present condition and aspect of affairs.

A short review of the different interests, past and present, is necessary before answering this question. Our policy up to ten years ago might shortly be said to be alliance with Turkey in support of the Ottoman Power as necessary to us in connection with our Indian Empire and our Mussulman subjects. The Russian campaign exposed the weakness of Turkey in Europe; when the Russians reached the gates of Constan-

tinople, and the Treaty of San Stefano electrified statesmen in every country, a congress at Berlin was summoned, and the Great Powers agreed upon a treaty under which a new departure was taken towards forming the different Christian peoples of the Balkans into separate States. Thenceforward our policy has been to extend this idea, to foster these States (presumably also under agreement and with the sympathy of our co-signatories to that treaty—Germany, Austria-Hungary, France, and Italy), to promote the interests of these nationalities as natural opponents, when assured of their independence, to Russian aggression.

If this had been the policy of England and of Europe at the time of the Treaty of Adrianople, how different would the position of the people of the Balkans, of Macedonia, of Albania, of Epirus, Thessaly, and Greece have been now!

But action towards making a permanent settlement always appears in the history of the East to be taken when the proper period for it has passed. The tree had for long required pruning; the gardener neglected it, and when taken in hand his efforts to restore its vigour and fruitfulness failed. Russia took too prominent a part in the emancipation of Bulgaria for her ever to allow that State to rise and move apart from her in-

fluence; this, I hold, as a paramount factor, both national and sentimental, which every Russian from the Czar downwards will obstinately cling to; but, at the same time, I object strongly to the methods and manner employed by Russia in prosecuting her claims to that position.

There is a peace party as well as a war party in Russia; the latter, unfortunately, most influential with the Emperor; the former know full well that the Empire is running a great risk by its present policy, and that an European war would be very disastrous. Private letters from Southern Russia speak of the almost desperate condition of affairs; money and securities depreciated; commerce idle; the army, which is being mobilised at several points, badly equipped and quite unready; the vaunted Black Sea Navy as consisting of two ironclads and two old Popoffkas. Defences there are none; Sevastopol remains as it was in 1856; Batoum has only the old earthworks of the Turks with but few guns in position. If Russia is to be fought and checked, Europe will never find her so unprepared and inefficiently armed as the Empire is at the present time, notwithstanding all the sensational stories about her naval and military armaments.

If checked, however, we must remember it will only be a question of time; ten, fifteen,

twenty-five years may elapse, and Russia's policy will remain the same throughout; another effort will be made, another defeat perhaps incurred, but with relentless purpose she will pursue her definite aim. Unless the other Powers of Europe choose to unite in opposing Russia in Europe, no one can say that it is England's interest to enter the lists. Turkey is so weak, that whichever Power firmly pursues a distinct policy, and shows the most determined front, in the end secures control over the Sultan and his Ministers; the divided counsels of the other Powers of Europe are unavailing with the Turk. It may be that we shall wake some day to find unanimity; but until that is assured, the Porte knows perfectly well that individual though friendly advice is of no practical value.

Austria-Hungary is at the present moment divided in an almost hopeless way; she challenges England to defend British (?) policy, *i.e.*, to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for her! The Monarchy is all for action, the Empire is led by the nose by Prince Bismarck. Eighteen months of continuity in the direction of England's Foreign Office (which was to elevate our voice in the councils of Europe) have only shown how little we can rely on the disinterested motives of the statesmen now predominant in

Germany and Austria. They will play their cards for their own hands, and even try to force their partners'! We must therefore make our own game.

A combination of the Balkan States, of Roumania, Servia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, and Greece has been suggested, but is practically impossible through individual jealousies and separate inclinations towards the rival Empires.

Apart from the consideration that Great Britain has the strongest claims to be heard in any settlement of the Eastern question, from precedent on account of our sacrifices in 1854–56, and the frequent leading part we have taken in the affairs of all the interested countries, there remain the important trading relations under our flag. In dealing with the land settlement, it seems impossible for us now to assume any other part than that of mediator, and as such we should exercise a pacific influence which should prevent war, or at least localise any quarrel that may arise.

If the Porte could be induced to see that an arrangement of Turkey's European provinces—Macedonia, Thessaly, Epirus, and Albania—upon similar lines to that of Eastern Roumelia, which, while recognising the suzerainty of the Sultan, would ensure the payment to Turkey of the existing revenue under the contract and manage-

ment of neighbouring States, the solution might be found in that direction (*backed by United Europe*) and upon these lines.

As regards our trade we are bound to protect it; the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles must be free to us, whatever happens; if closed or threatened our fleet should be strong and powerful enough to blockade the straits; to take and hold the island of Mitylene, or any other place preferred, until a free passage to the Black Sea and the Danube was secured to us; our determination to this effect should be clearly and unequivocally expressed. A firm declaration of our position would do much to clear the horizon; the clouds now hanging over the East are caused as much by the irresolution of statesmen in England, France, Austria, and elsewhere, as by the troublous storms in Eastern Europe itself.

THE END.

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